

DEMOGRAPHIC STRESS AND GOVERNANCE:  
THE INFLUENCE OF NIGERIAN POPULATION GROWTH  
ON THE RISK OF CIVIL CONFLICT

BY

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The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. They do not reflect the official position of the US Government, Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, or Air University.



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## ABSTRACT

This study of population growth attempts to answer some basic questions. Does population growth stress a state's demographics enough to increase the risk of conflict? Can good governance either prevent or mitigate such an increased risk? Although the annual rate of world population growth is declining, the United Nations projects world population to reach a staggering 9.6 billion by 2050. In that time, Nigeria is expected to contribute significantly by reaching 440 million and overtake the United States as the world's third most populous state. This study investigates the relationship of demographic pressure to the risk of intrastate conflict, applies evidence of a relationship to Nigeria, and offers recommendations for both Nigeria and the United States to mitigate this risk.



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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

*Short of nuclear war itself, population growth is the gravest issue the world faces. If we do not act, the problem will be solved by famine, riots, insurrection and war.*

Robert McNamara  
Former President of World Bank

In 1798, English scholar Thomas Robert Malthus postulated that if left unchecked by disease, war, and famine, population would double every 25 years.<sup>1</sup> Even when considering these population-limiting factors since 1798, it appears Malthus' prediction was overestimated. Nevertheless, the population has grown at an extraordinary rate since the early 19th Century. The world population slowly increased from an estimated 300 million 2000 years ago to 1 billion in 1804.<sup>2</sup> Since 1804, the population has exploded to over 7 billion today.<sup>3</sup> Although the population growth rate has steadily decreased since the 1960s, some states' numbers continue to surge. Most of the projected increases are from developing states, which may negatively affect certain internal demographic factors.

While the United Nations does not formally define the term *developing*, common understanding includes all states with the exception of Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan.<sup>4</sup> Within the developing world, increased population affects demographic factors such as youth bulge, unemployment, urbanization, and economic inequality. The purpose of this study is to, (1) investigate how projected population and demographic changes in Nigeria over the next 35 years may increase the risk of civil conflict, (2) assess the role of governance in mitigating an increased risk of conflict, (3) determine the potential impact to United States' national security interests,

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Robert Malthus, *On Population*, ed. Gertrude Himmelfarb (New York: The Modern Library, 1960), 12.

<sup>2</sup> *The World at Six Billion* (United Nations Population Division), 3-4, accessed April 14, 2015, <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/sixbillion/sixbilpart1.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> "As World Passes 7 Billion Milestone, UN Urges Action to Meet Key Challenges," *UN News Centre*, October 31, 2011, Online edition, sec. News, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40257#.VS7Nw-lFBjp>.

<sup>4</sup> *Composition of Macro Geographical (continental) Regions Geographical Sub-Regions, and Selected Economic and Other Groupings* (United Nations Statistics Division, October 31, 2013), <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49regin.htm>.

and (4) make recommendations to adjust United States' policy and strategy towards Nigeria accordingly.

The intended audience of this study includes individuals from United States government and organizations with an interest in West Africa, specifically Nigeria. The study will appeal to those with a background in sociology, security, or economics tasked with determining courses of action for decision makers. Determining the impact of Nigerian internal conflict and unrest on US interests requires a whole-of-community approach. The complexity of projecting influence in order to aid in establishing and maintaining stability in a developing state like Nigeria involves the consideration of each of the US instruments of national power: diplomatic, information, military, economic and culture (DIME-C).

The author's hypothesis in this study is the convergence of the population-driven demographic factors of youth bulge, unemployment, urbanization, and economic inequality in Nigeria will result in the increased risk of conflict. Assuming the United States continues to face constrained budgets and military manpower reductions, it may present a challenge for the United States to project desired influence in the region. As the evidence will show, each of these demographic factors alone has the potential for causing conflict. This study attempts to demonstrate that the combination of two or more of these factors further increases the potential for conflict. This study will also investigate the impact of governance in states that experience demographic pressure.

In a 2002 study, George Mason University Professor Jack Goldstone concluded the following demographic changes appear to increase the risk of internal political and ethnic conflicts: "...rapid labor force growth in slow-growing economies, a rapid increase in educated youth aspiring to elite positions when such positions are scarce, [and]...urbanization that exceeds employment growth...."<sup>5</sup> The same study found evidence that states with larger populations are at greater risk of armed conflict.<sup>6</sup> Finally, Goldstone found that in addition to increased risk, the intensity of conflict increases in states with large youth cohorts.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Jack A. Goldstone, "Population and Security: How Demographic Change Can Lead to Violent Conflict," *Journal of International Affairs* 56, no. 1 (2002): 4–5.

<sup>6</sup> Goldstone, "Population and Security: How Demographic Change Can Lead to Violent Conflict," 5.

<sup>7</sup> Goldstone, "Population and Security: How Demographic Change Can Lead to Violent Conflict," 5.



Nigeria is of significant strategic importance to the United States, as evidenced by the inauguration of the US-Nigeria Binational Commission in 2010. The United States establishes such commissions with valued and strategic partners. This partnership is an enduring, collaborative forum to expand cooperation across shared interests. These shared interests are captured in four working groups: (1) good governance, transparency, and integrity; (2) energy and investment; (3) Niger Delta and regional security cooperation; and (4) food security and agriculture.<sup>8</sup>

Nigeria is the largest producer of oil in Africa. Prior to 2012, the United States typically imported between 9 and 11 percent of its crude oil from Nigeria, but this number has dropped to 1 percent in 2014.<sup>9</sup> This decrease is due to increased US shale oil production, which has also caused a 90 percent decrease of African crude oil imports since 2010.<sup>10</sup> It remains to be seen whether this percentage will increase or not. Nigeria is also strategically important because US allies import Nigerian oil. Europe is the largest regional importer of Nigerian crude oil and Nigeria's oil exports to Europe represented 45 percent of crude oil and condensate exports in 2014.<sup>11</sup>

The United States has an interest in maintaining positive diplomatic relations with Nigeria due to foreign investment, trade, and regional stability.<sup>12</sup> The United States, South Africa, and the United Kingdom are the top three new project investors in Nigeria with United States investments comprising 14 percent of total investments.<sup>13</sup> Nigeria is the top recipient of US foreign direct investments (37 percent) in Sub-Saharan African states.<sup>14</sup> In 2012 alone, US foreign direct investments totaled \$8.2 billion, an increase of

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<sup>8</sup> "All About the US-Nigeria Binational Commission," *From the Drive, US Diplomatic Mission, Nigeria*, October 19, 2011, <http://usembassynigeria.blogspot.com/2011/10/all-about-us-nigeria-bi-national.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Matthew Philips, "U.S. Oil Imports From Africa Are Down 90 Percent," *Bloomberg Business*, May 22, 2014, <http://www.bloomberg.com>.

<sup>10</sup> Philips, "U.S. Oil Imports From Africa Are Down 90 Percent."

<sup>11</sup> *Nigeria Country Analysis Brief Overview* (US Energy Information Administration, February 27, 2015), <http://www.eia.gov/countries/country-data.cfm?fips=ni>.

<sup>12</sup> John A. Ayam, "The Development of Nigeria-US Relations," *Journal of Third World Studies* 25, no. 2 (2008): 124.

<sup>13</sup> *Africa By Numbers: A Focus on Nigeria* (World Economic Forum on Africa 2014, 2014), [http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-Nigeria-Country-Report/\\$FILE/EY-Nigeria-Country-Report.pdf](http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-Nigeria-Country-Report/$FILE/EY-Nigeria-Country-Report.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Amy Copley, Fenohasina Maret-Rakotondrazaka, and Amadou Sy, "The U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit: A Focus on Foreign Direct Investment," *Brookings: Africa In Focus*, July 11, 2014, <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/africa-in-focus/posts/2014/07/11-foreign-direct-investment-us-africa-leaders-summit>.

53.6 percent from 2011.<sup>15</sup> In addition, the United States conducts significant trade with Nigeria. In 2013, the United States and Nigeria conducted a total of \$18.2 billion (two-way) in goods trade.<sup>16</sup>

China is continuing to build relationships and influence in Africa. This is likely a concern for the United States as China continues to increase its regional and international presence. The United States has in the past placed conditions for providing foreign aid and security hardware based on concerns over Nigeria's human rights record. The United States' reticence has been China's opportunity to build foreign policy in Africa, and Nigeria has been one of China's primary objectives.<sup>17</sup> China's second largest source of crude oil imports in 2013 was Africa, with Nigeria being among the largest suppliers.<sup>18</sup> In addition, Nigeria is one of China's top five African trading partners.<sup>19</sup>

Due to these significant economic interests, Nigeria's security is important to the United States. As the most populous state in Africa, Nigeria is an influential regional presence. The US National Security Strategy identifies the goal of reinforcing stability in Nigeria as an essential sub-regional linchpin.<sup>20</sup> Since gaining independence from the United Kingdom in 1960, Nigeria has struggled with gaining and maintaining stability. The most recent example of instability within Nigeria is the terrorist organization Boko Haram, which is currently conducting a destabilizing campaign of violent attacks focused on northern Nigeria. In its 2015 Posture Statement, US Africa Command claimed Nigerian insecurity increasingly threatens US interests.<sup>21</sup>

### **Research Methodology and Analysis**

This study's methodology includes the examination of how demographic factors cause, or correlate with, a higher potential for conflict. The use of case studies will provide evidence of the linkage to combinations of the demographic factors of youth

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<sup>15</sup> *US-Nigeria Trade Facts* (United States Trade Representative, May 1, 2014), <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/africa/west-africa/nigeria>.

<sup>16</sup> *US-Nigeria Trade Facts*.

<sup>17</sup> Ashley Jackson, "Nigeria: A Security Overview," *The Round Table* 96, No. 392 (October 2007): 593.

<sup>18</sup> Jackson, "Nigeria: A Security Overview," 593.

<sup>19</sup> Christopher Alessi and Beina Xu, *China in Africa* (Council on Foreign Relations, April 27, 2015), <http://www.cfr.org/china/china-africa/p9557>.

<sup>20</sup> "United States National Security Strategy," 2010, 45, [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss\\_viewer/national\\_security\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> *US Africa Command Posture Statement*, 2015, 4.

bulge, unemployment, urbanization, and economic inequality, along with counter case studies that provide contrary evidence. The author will first describe population growth history and current trends, followed by an investigation of the influence of the aforementioned demographic factors, including combinations of the same, on the risk of conflict. Second, the author will assess how demographic pressure could increase the risk of internal conflict in Nigeria. Third will be multiple case studies, which provide evidence of demographic pressure increasing the risk of conflict, followed by several contrary studies where states experienced no conflict. For each of these case studies and Nigeria, this thesis will determine the contextual factor of governance and its influence on the risk of conflict. This thesis concludes with implications for US interests and subsequent recommendations for policy and strategy.

Evidence will include population projections based on current trends, comparable case studies, and examples of conflict caused by or correlated with these demographic factors. The primary techniques used to gather evidence include academic journal searches and the use of projections from authoritative sources such as the United Nations, the US Department of State, and US Africa Command. The major questions this study attempts to answer include: (1) what types of internal conflict are possible/likely over time if the factors identified here occur in Nigeria? (Insurgency, civil war, terrorism); (2) what are the similarities of the selected case studies to Nigeria's situation? (3) what can the Nigerian government do to mitigate the increased potential of conflict? (Job creation, education, birth control); and (4) what are the impacts to US national security and recommendations for a strategy that best protect US interests in Nigeria?

The author's hypothesis is based on case evidence and forecasts of population and demographic changes. Criteria for accepting evidence include: (1) demonstration of population growth's impact on youth bulge, unemployment, urbanization, and economic inequality; (2) evidence of these demographic factors causing, or correlating to, conflict; (3) evidence of the influence of governance as a contextual factor during periods of demographic stress, and (4) similarity of the selected case studies to Nigeria's current or projected situation. The study's main limitation is the lack of quantitative evidence of causation or correlation between the demographic factors and conflict. As such, this

study will be a qualitative investigation wherein the linkages are used as evidence of the facts.

In addition to official population and demographic projections, the literature surrounding the topics of population growth, demographics, and conflict is extensive. The following is a sample of the research that provided the foundation upon which this study is built. Rhodes College Assistant Professor Jennifer Dabbs Sciubba's book titled, *The Future Faces of War: Population and National Security*, was an extremely valuable source regarding demographic trends and potential impacts to national security. Especially useful was the analysis of youth bulges and urbanization. This thesis will use Dr. Sciubba's linkage of unemployed youth, urban growth, and conflict in an attempt to forecast the potential for Nigerian civil conflict.

George Mason University Professor Jack Goldstone authored numerous works cited throughout this thesis. This thesis uses several of his articles regarding the implications of population growth and demographic stress to establish a foundation for predicting the risk of Nigerian conflict. In addition, Professor Goldstone's book *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World* provided useful source material for two of the case studies included in this thesis.

Dr. Henrik Urdal, a political scientist from the University of Oslo, authored and co-authored numerous articles in which he analyzed multiple demographic linkages to armed conflict. Of particular value was his 2006 article, "A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence." Dr. Urdal's thorough research, quantitative methods, and empirical results proved a solid source from which to draw.

A 2003 study by Population Action International (PAI) titled, *The Security Demographic: Population and Civil Conflict after the Cold War* provided a wealth of research-based results and theory regarding population growth and demographic stress. In particular, PAI's study offered measurable indications of the increased potential of conflict based on youth bulge size and urban population growth rate. This thesis used these measurable indications to analyze case studies. The evidence provided by these sources proved essential in building this thesis' case for population-induced demographic factors, state governance, and civil conflict.

## Chapter summary

Chapter 2 explores the history of, and projections for, population growth both around the globe and in Nigeria. Next, this chapter provides evidence for the impact of population growth on multiple demographic factors. The first factor concerns youth bulge and the linkage to conflict including recruitment of this overpopulated segment by insurgent or terrorist groups. Also examined are the demographic factors of unemployment, urbanization, and economic inequality for their potential causation or correlation with conflict. Next, this chapter presents a history of conflict in Nigeria as a means to illustrate a trend of instability. Finally, Chapter 2 concludes with a description and examples of governance quality.

Chapter 3 investigates the study's main argument by applying the notion of population growth and changes in the aforementioned demographic factors to the risk of conflict in Nigeria. This chapter will investigate Nigerian youth bulge, unemployment, urbanization, and economic inequality, and the contextual factor of governance, to determine the potential for increased risk of conflict. In addition, recommendations are offered for the Nigerian government to mitigate any risks.

Chapter 4 contains two sets of case studies. The first set describes instances of population growth and associated demographic factors causing or correlating with conflict or violence. The second set of *counter* case studies explores circumstances where states experienced demographic pressure but no conflict. Each study also includes an assessment as to the influence of governance on the risk of conflict.

The 17th Century English Revolution provides the setting for the first case study, which examines how youth bulge, unemployment, and urbanization can ignite conflict. Next is the late 18th Century French revolution, which experienced a youth bulge, unemployment, urbanization, and economic inequality prior to conflict. The third case study investigates the effect of a significant youth bulge and high unemployment rates on conflict in Tajikistan. The fourth case study explores population growth, inequality, and violence in Indonesia. The fifth evaluates the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict to determine the impact from youth bulge, unemployment, urbanization, and economic inequality. The sixth study investigates youth bulge, unemployment, and urbanization in several Pacific island states.

The first counter case study considers the existence of a youth bulge and economic inequality with no conflict in Singapore. The next study also examines the absence of conflict in Malaysia despite the presence of a youth bulge and economic inequality. The final counter case study explored Botswana where a youth bulge and high urban growth rates did not induce or coincide with conflict.

Chapter 5 concludes with a summary of findings, recommendations for US policy and strategy, as well as recommendations for additional research. By exploring the impact of these issues, the hope is to influence necessary action that will result in a more stable and secure Nigeria.



## Chapter 2

### Population Growth, Demographics, and Conflict

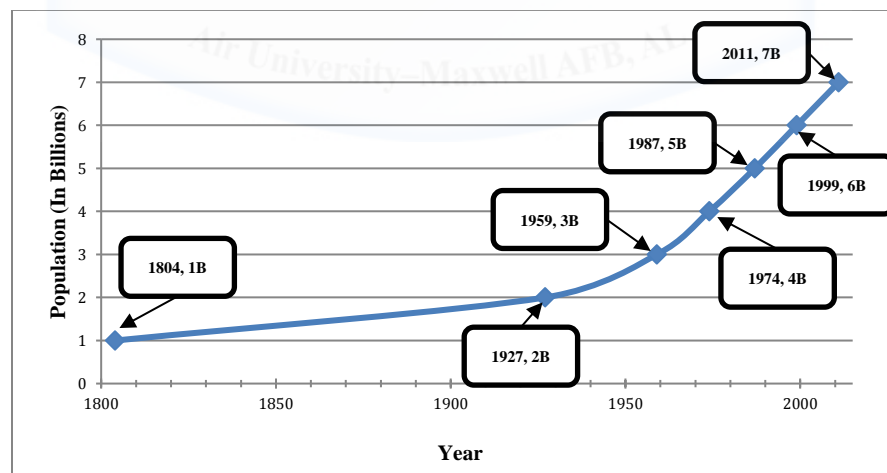
*Overpopulation in various countries has become a serious threat to the health of people and a grave obstacle to any attempt to organize peace on this planet.*

Albert Einstein  
Physicist

The purpose of this chapter is four-fold. It begins with a brief history of world population growth, current trends, and future projections. Second, a summary of Nigerian history is presented, with a concentration on instability and conflict. Third is literature-based evidence that identifies demographic factors, including combinations of these factors, causing or correlating with intrastate conflict. This chapter concludes with a description of the concept of governance.

#### World Population

World population reached one billion people by 1804. By 1927, it doubled to two billion. In less than 100 years since 1927, the world added over five billion more.<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 1: World Population in Increments of One Billion (B)**

*Source: Adapted from data collected from the United Nations Population Division.*

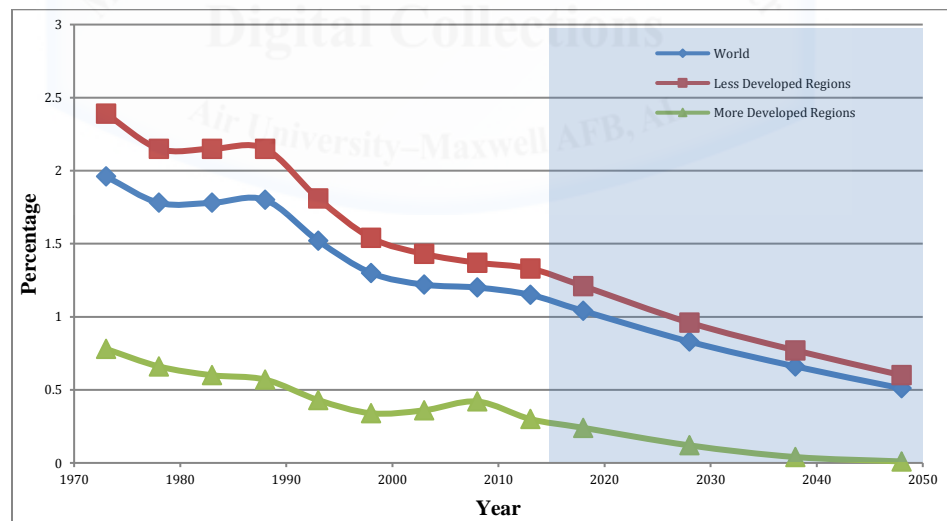
<sup>1</sup> *The World at Six Billion* (United Nations Population Division), 3-4, accessed April 14, 2015, <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/sixbillion/sixbilpart1.pdf>.



The Population Reference Bureau describes the rapid increase of human population beginning in the 19th century as “the mortality revolution.”

Human population grew rapidly during the Industrial Revolution, not because the birth rate increased, but because the death rate began to fall. This mortality revolution began in the 1700s in Europe and spread to North America by the mid-1800s. Death rates fell as new farming and transportation technology expanded the food supply and lessened the danger of famine. New technologies and increasing industrialization improved public health and living standards. Late in the 19th century, birth rates also began to fall in Europe and North America, slowing the population growth that had resulted from continued moderately higher birth rates than death rates.<sup>2</sup>

Although the global average rate of growth is slowing, the population continues to grow.<sup>3</sup> The growth rate for more developed states has slowed significantly, while the rate in less developed states has yet to slow to a point for more manageable and stable population growth. As is depicted in the following graph (Figure 2), the United Nations expects future growth rates to continue to be highest in developing regions.<sup>4</sup>



**Figure 2: Average annual rate of world population change, 1970-2050**

*Source: Adapted from data collected from the United Nations Population Division.*

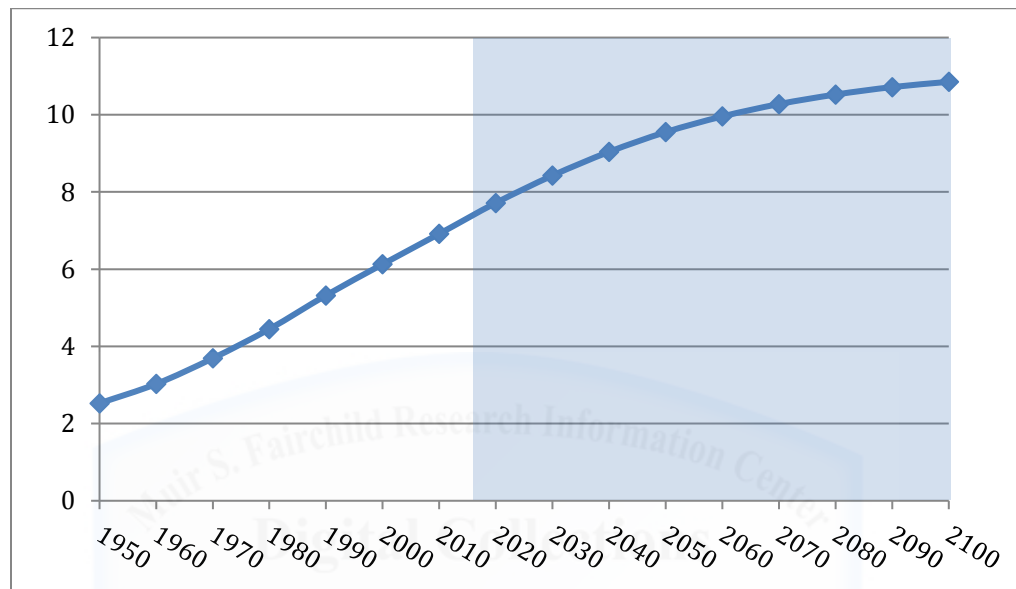
<sup>2</sup> *Human Population: Future Growth* (Population Reference Bureau), accessed April 30, 2015, <http://www.prb.org/Publications/Lesson-Plans/HumanPopulation/FutureGrowth.aspx>.

<sup>3</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*, Demographic Profiles (Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, 2012), xx.

<sup>4</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Volume I* (United Nations), 4, [http://esa.un.org/wpp/Documentation/pdf/WPP2012\\_Volume-I\\_Comprehensive-Tables.pdf](http://esa.un.org/wpp/Documentation/pdf/WPP2012_Volume-I_Comprehensive-Tables.pdf).



The United Nations projects that the current world population of 7.2 billion will reach 9.6 billion by 2050, and 10.9 billion by 2100.<sup>5</sup> These estimates are based on a medium-variant projection. The low- and high-variant projections for the year 2050 are 8.3 billion and 10.9 billion, respectively. Figure 3 shows the projected world population growth (medium-variant) through the year 2100.<sup>6</sup>



**Figure 3: World Population (in Billions), based on medium variant projection.**

*Source: Adapted from data collected from the United Nations Population Division.*

Through the year 2100, eight countries account for over half of the projected population increase. Six of those countries, including Nigeria, are in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>7</sup> Nigeria's current population of 174 million, the highest in Africa, is projected to reach 440 million and overtake the United States as the world's third most populous state by 2050.<sup>8</sup> These population estimates provide the impetus for this study. It is not the author's hypothesis that population growth alone increases the risk of intrastate conflict but rather that it fuels or exacerbates certain demographic factors, which within the context of a particular state, increases the risk of conflict.

<sup>5</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Volume I*, xv Based on a Medium Variant Projection.

<sup>6</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Volume I*, xv Based on a Medium Variant Projection.

<sup>7</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Volume I*, xix.

<sup>8</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Volume I*, 58–62.

## Nigerian History

### 1960-1999

With noted exceptions, the following historical summary of Nigeria from 1960 to 1999 is from chapter 3 of Toyin Falola and Adebayo O. Oyebade's 2010 book *Hot Spot: Sub-Saharan Africa*.<sup>9</sup> This summary of conflict does not intend to use the past to predict the risk of future conflict, but rather to characterize the unstable nature of this state. Although Henrik Urdal, Research Professor at the Journal of Peace Research, cited several studies that indicated recent conflict history appears to be a predictor of new conflict.<sup>10</sup> Nigeria has experienced ethnic and religious violence since gaining its independence from Great Britain in 1960. The major ethnic groups include the Hausa and Fulani (located predominantly in Northern Nigeria), the Yoruba (located predominantly in the West), and the Igbo (located mostly in the East). The vast majority of the Hausa and Fulani are Muslim while the Igbo and Yoruba are predominantly Christian.

Since gaining independence, Nigeria has experienced many conflicts, uprisings, coups, and other violence. The Tiv, a northern minority group, conducted violent uprisings against perceived domination by the Hausa and Fulani in 1960 and 1964. In 1965, bloody riots and politically motivated killings followed contested regional parliamentary elections in the West. The riots continued until a military coup d'état in January 1966 ended its First Republic and installed Major-General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi. Ethnic tensions remained following the January coup as evidenced by a second coup in July 1966 that included the massacre of thousands of Igbo in northern Nigeria by the Hausa and Fulani and brought Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon to power. These mass killings and exodus of the Igbo from many parts of Nigeria, especially from the North, resulted in the Eastern Region of Nigeria succeeding, which became the short-lived Republic of Biafra. The subsequent Nigerian Civil War, or War of Unity, resulted in the death of as many as three million Igbo and ultimately the reunification of Biafra with Nigeria in 1970.

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<sup>9</sup> Toyin Falola and Adebayo O. Oyebade, *Hot Spot: Sub-Saharan Africa* (Santa Barbara, CA: Hot Spot Histories, 2010), chap. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Henrik Urdal, "A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence," *International Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (September 2006): 619.

In all, Nigeria has experienced seven military coups d'état (including the first two in 1966) and operated under military rule for almost 30 years (1966-1979 and 1983-1998). Military dictatorship in Nigeria included human rights abuse and violation of civil liberties, often spurring protests and violent riots. The third coup took place in July 1975 and began the military rule of Murtala Ramat Mohammed. The fourth coup occurred in February 1976 with Mohammed's assassination, but did not topple the administration. Nigeria's fifth coup was in December 1983 and ended the administration of the democratically elected (in 1979) President Shehu Shagari. The bloodless December 1983 coup installed the military junta of Major General Muhammadu Buhari. Buhari was deposed in 1985 by a military coup led by Major-General Ibrahim Babangida. In 1986, Babangida implemented the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) to address deteriorating economic problems. The results of SAP were disastrous and led to widespread civil unrest from 1987 to 1992. Babangida resigned in 1993 and was replaced by Chief Ernest Shonekan following the annulment of the election held in June that year. General Sani Abacha replaced Chief Shonekan who was forced to resign in August 1993 in a 'palace coup.' Nigeria transitioned to a democracy in 1999, although elections have continued to be a source of disagreement and violence. Additionally in 1999, 12 states in the North adopted the strict Islamic legal code, the Shari'a.

## **2000-Present**

Resentment and disagreement regarding the distribution of oil revenue has resulted in violent and bloody struggles. Years of conflict concerning oil in its Niger Delta region continue to be a concern for Nigeria's national security.<sup>11</sup> Formed in 2004, the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), an armed ethnic militia in the Niger Delta, engaged in violent struggles with federal authorities, oil corporations, and a destructive conflict with the rival Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV) in 2003 and 2004.<sup>12</sup> Watts and Ibaba claim that "despite the 2009 amnesty program, which resulted in the surrender of firearms, the renunciation of militancy by over 20,000 militia youths, the

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<sup>11</sup> Michael J. Watts and Samuel Ibaba, "Turbulent Oil: Conflict and Insecurity in the Niger Delta," *African Security* 4, no. 1 (2011): 1.

<sup>12</sup> Falola and Oyebade, *Hot Spot: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 87.

cessation of attacks on oil installations, and the subsequent rise in oil production, concerns on insecurity in the region are still very high.”<sup>13</sup>

The most recent threat to Nigerian national security comes from the radical Islamic group known as Boko Haram. This northern-based terror group began to attract worldwide attention in 2009 with what seemed initially to be only a disturbance but grew into a major security threat.<sup>14</sup> Boko Haram is opposed to Western culture, including and especially education. Following the Nigerian government’s execution of Boko Haram’s leader Mohammed Yusaf in 2009, the terror group has declared a ‘holy Jihad’ on Nigeria.<sup>15</sup> Evidence of this terror group’s radical actions based on anti-Western culture, along with its professed alignment with Al Qaeda, has created significant concern for Western leaders. This brief summary of Nigeria’s violent and unstable history provides a backdrop for the following evaluation of demographic factors and their potential for increasing the risk of conflict. The application of this analysis to Nigeria follows in the next chapter.

### **Demographic Factors and Conflict**

There has been much debate concerning population’s impact on conflict. Urdal wrote, “Total population size is clearly associated with conflict propensity.”<sup>16</sup> This section’s intention is to investigate population growth-fueled demographic factors of youth bulge, unemployment, urbanization, and economic inequality, and provide evidence that each of these factors has caused or correlated with intrastate conflict. This chapter then examines how the coincidence of these demographic factors further increases conflict risk. The chapter’s final section describes the concept of governance.

Extensive literature exists regarding these demographic factors and their relationship with conflict, including arguments for both positive and negative causation and correlation. Although conflicts occur both as interstate and intrastate phenomena, this study will focus exclusively on intrastate conflict to include civil war, insurgencies, and terrorism.

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<sup>13</sup> Watts and Ibaba, “Turbulent Oil: Conflict and Insecurity in the Niger Delta,” 5.

<sup>14</sup> Hakeem Onapajo and Ufo Okeke Uzodike, “Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria: Man, the State, and the International System,” *African Security Review* 21, no. 3 (September 2012): 24.

<sup>15</sup> Onapajo and Uzodike, “Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria,” 25, 27.

<sup>16</sup> Urdal, “A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence,” 619.

## Youth Bulge

A “youth bulge” is defined as a relatively large young adult population in the age range of 15-29.<sup>17</sup> A risk assessment performed by a 2003 Population Action International study found a positive relationship between the proportion of young adults and the risk of civil conflict.<sup>18</sup> The study, which used data from 1990-2000, determined “Countries with more than 40 percent of young adults (aged 15-29) in the population of adults (aged 15 and older) were 2.3 times as likely to experience an outbreak of civil conflict as countries with smaller proportions during the 1990’s.”<sup>19</sup> This quantitative threshold was achieved by first categorizing 145 states into the following three demographic stress categories: (1) a young adult population 40 percent or greater was considered extreme and high; (2) between 30 to 39.9 percent was considered medium; and (3) less than 30 percent was considered low.<sup>20</sup> The study calculated the likelihood of conflict by the proportion of states in each category that experienced a new civil conflict from 1990 to 2000.<sup>21</sup>

Similarly, another study by Population Action International published in 2007 found, “Between 1970 and 1999, 80 percent of all civil conflicts that caused at least 25 deaths occurred in countries in which 60 percent or more of the population was under age 30.”<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth Leahy, (now Elizabeth Leahy Madsen), a consultant on political demography for the Wilson Center’s Environmental Change and Security Program, discovered “the pattern has continued, with six out of nine new outbreaks of civil conflict between 2000 and 2006 occurring in countries with very young or youthful age structures.”<sup>23</sup> In a 2006 study, Henrik Urdal also concluded that large youth bulges increase the risk of armed conflict. Urdal’s results showed, “Youth bulges in the context of continued high fertility and high dependency make countries increasingly likely to experience armed conflict...”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Richard Paul Cincotta, *The Security Demographic: Population and Civil Conflict After the Cold War* (Washington, D.C: Population Action International, 2003), 42.

<sup>18</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 48.

<sup>19</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 48.

<sup>20</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 48.

<sup>21</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 48.

<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth Leahy et al., *The Shape of Things to Come: Why Age Structure Matters to a Safer, More Equitable World* (Washington, DC: Population Action International, 2007), 10.

<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Leahy, *Beginning the Demographic Transition: Very Young and Youthful Age Structures* (Environmental Change and Security Program, 2009), 40.

<sup>24</sup> Urdal, “A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence,” 619.

A youth bulge does not always cause or correlate with negative consequences. If a state is experiencing a prosperous economic situation for example, a youth bulge can be beneficial. A large number of people between the ages of 15-29 can help fuel economic growth when jobs are available. A relatively high number of working adults translates to a lower dependency ratio. Age dependency is a ratio of dependents (people younger than 15 and older than 64) to the working-age population (15-64).<sup>25</sup> A lower ratio indicates a lower burden for which the working population must provide support. Conversely, a higher ratio indicates a higher burden.

A youth bulge is not beneficial however when combined with high unemployment rates, and when the next generation's population size is even larger. The 2003 Population Action International study claimed that young men, specifically unemployed young men are the reason youth bulges are often volatile.<sup>26</sup> A high population of young males in developing states, eager for work and respect, typically find frustration when youth unemployment rates are higher than for the overall adult population. The next chapter's examination of Nigeria investigates the impact of a high, and increasing, age dependency ratio on the risk of conflict.

## Unemployment

Many states experience high unemployment. Certainly, high unemployment causes frustration among those unable to find work. However, does unemployment by itself correlate with conflict? The British Medical Journal published a 2002 study that attempted to determine root causes of violent conflict in developing states. This study concluded, "Where alternative opportunities are few, because of low incomes and poor employment, and the possibilities of enrichment by war are considerable, the incidence and duration of wars are likely to be greater."<sup>27</sup> The economic principle of opportunity cost best explains this logic. In other words, with no prospect for employment, individuals forsake very little by choosing a revolutionary path. Hajji Fazul Rahim, a leader of the Abdulrahimzai tribe in Afghanistan was quoted in the New York Times as

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<sup>25</sup> *Age Dependency Ratio* (The World Bank, 2013), <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.DPND>.

<sup>26</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 44.

<sup>27</sup> Francis Stewart, Douglas Holdstock, and Antonio Jarquin, "Root Causes of Violent Conflict in Developing Countries," *British Medical Journal*, February 9, 2002, 342.



stating, “Most of the Taliban in my area are young men who need jobs...we just need to make them busy. If we give them work, we can weaken the Taliban.”<sup>28</sup> Given the multitude of evidence on this subject, Jennifer Dabbs Sciubba, Rhodes College Assistant Professor recommended, “Providing economic opportunities may help dissuade potential extremists from choosing that route and instead provide them with more legitimate opportunities.”<sup>29</sup>

Conversely, results from a 2011 study published in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, “reject a positive correlation between unemployment and violence.”<sup>30</sup> This study offers two possible counterinsurgency-related reasons why their data showed that higher unemployment is associated with less violence. The first was the potential that counterinsurgency forces pay a lower cost for intelligence in a high unemployment region. The second was the potential that counterinsurgency measures (checkpoints, etc.) may interrupt commerce.<sup>31</sup> However, these results do not consider that regardless of counterinsurgency success, high unemployment may still motivate individuals towards a revolutionary path. The 2011 study also supports this thesis’ hypothesis of factor coincidence by stating with confidence that higher unemployment causes greater political violence when other mechanisms are considered.<sup>32</sup>

## Urbanization

Urbanization is defined as “the proportional growth of urban dwellers in any population, at the expense of the rural population.”<sup>33</sup> Urbanization can be a generally positive trend. Cities can provide citizens with education, employment opportunities, and health care. Urbanization can ease population pressure as families may produce fewer children due to living space limitations. In addition, without rural farms to maintain,

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<sup>28</sup> Dexter Filkins, “Afghans Offer Jobs to Taliban Rank and File If They Defect,” *New York Times*, November 27, 2009, Online edition, [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/28/world/asia/28militias.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/28/world/asia/28militias.html?_r=0).

<sup>29</sup> Jennifer Dabbs Sciubba, *The Future Faces of War: Population and National Security*, The Changing Face of War (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2011), 29.

<sup>30</sup> Eli Berman et al., “Do Working Men Rebel? Insurgency and Unemployment in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Philippines,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55 (2011): 518–519.

<sup>31</sup> Berman et al., “Do Working Men Rebel? Insurgency and Unemployment in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Philippines,” 618–619.

<sup>32</sup> Berman et al., “Do Working Men Rebel? Insurgency and Unemployment in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Philippines,” 618–619.

<sup>33</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 50.

fewer children are needed, which may ease population growth. In 1950, 30 percent of the world's population resided in urban areas; in 2014, it climbed to 54 percent.<sup>34</sup> By 2050, 66 percent is projected to be urban.<sup>35</sup> Three states (India, China, and Nigeria) are expected to account for 37 percent of the projected growth of the world's urban population between 2014 and 2050. The United Nations projects India to add 404 million urban dwellers, China 292 million, and Nigeria 212 million.<sup>36</sup> This projected urban growth can be a positive trend if states are prepared. States are unprepared when they fail to anticipate urban growth by building the infrastructure required for population increases. When states do not develop the necessary infrastructure to support the population, rapid and unplanned urban growth can lead to sub-standard housing, pollution, and environmental degradation.<sup>37</sup>

Large cities can also increase the risk of internal conflict. Jennifer Sciubba wrote, "regime security is greatly threatened by the creation of safe havens for rebels and extremists in cities."<sup>38</sup> In addition, the rate of urban population growth matters. According to Richard P. Cincotta, senior research associate at Population Action International, "During the 1990s, countries with a high rate of urban population growth were about twice as likely as other states to experience an outbreak of civil conflict."<sup>39</sup>

Population Action International's 2003 study found that, "States with urban population growth rates above 4 percent were about twice as likely to sustain the outbreak of a civil conflict as countries with lower rates."<sup>40</sup> This threshold was determined similarly to the quantitative analysis performed for the youth bulge category thresholds. The urban growth rate analysis also categorized 145 states into three demographic stress categories: (1) an annual rate of urban population growth of 4.0 percent or greater was considered extreme and high stress; (2) a rate between 1.0 to 3.9 percent was considered medium; and (3) a rate less than 1.0 percent was considered

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<sup>34</sup> *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision* (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs), accessed January 10, 2015, <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Highlights/WUP2014-Highlights.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision*.

<sup>36</sup> *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision*.

<sup>37</sup> *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision*, 3.

<sup>38</sup> Sciubba, *The Future Faces of War*, 116.

<sup>39</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 25.

<sup>40</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 13.



low.<sup>41</sup> The study calculated the likelihood of conflict by the proportion of states in each category that experienced a new civil conflict from 1990 to 2000.<sup>42</sup>

Can rapid urban growth alone increase the risk of conflict? For a 1995 Project on Environment, Population and Security, Peter Gizewski and Thomas Homer-Dixon from the University of Toronto argued that previous studies that claimed rapid urban growth alone could cause conflict were too simplistic.<sup>43</sup> Rather, Gizewski and Homer-Dixon offered that urban growth requires interaction with other factors such as economic recession and ethnic cleavages in order to produce conflict.<sup>44</sup>

### **Economic Inequality**

Evidence also indicates economic inequality can increase the risk of conflict. An individual may feel that his or her underachievement status or goals are due to unequal or unfair circumstances. Professor Ted Robert Gurr, University of Maryland, described the term “relative deprivation” as “actors’ perception of discrepancy between their value expectations (goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are entitled) and their value capabilities (goods and conditions they think they are capable of getting and keeping).”<sup>45</sup> Aristotle recognized the relationship between inequality and revolution when he wrote, “it is the ambition of equality which incites people to seditious action.”<sup>46</sup> In a 2008 study Gudrun Østby, Senior Researcher at the Journal of Peace Research, quoted United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan who in 1999 said, “What is highly explosive is... ‘horizontal’ social inequality: when power and resources are unequally distributed between groups that are also differentiated in other ways—for instance by race, religion, or language. So-called ‘ethnic’ conflicts occur between groups which are distinct in one or more of these ways, when one of them feels it is being discriminated

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<sup>41</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 48.

<sup>42</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 48.

<sup>43</sup> Peter Gizewski and Thomas Homer-Dixon, *Urban Growth and Violence: Will the Future Resemble the Past?*, Occasional Paper (Washington, DC: Project on Environment, Population and Security, June 1995), 17.

<sup>44</sup> Peter Gizewski and Thomas Homer-Dixon, *Urban Growth and Violence: Will the Future Resemble the Past?*, 11–15.

<sup>45</sup> Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1970), 24.

<sup>46</sup> Aristotle, *The Politics of Aristotle*, trans. J.E.C. Welldon (New York: Macmillan, 1883), 341.

against, or another enjoys privileges which it fears to lose.”<sup>47</sup> In the same study, Østby found that “Horizontal social inequality has a robust positive effect on conflict...”<sup>48</sup> Research published in the *International Studies Quarterly* in 2014 also found, “political and socioeconomic disparities increase the risk of civil war primarily when they overlap with ethnic cleavages.”<sup>49</sup>

As a counterargument Professors James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin from the Department of Political Science at Stanford University noted, “state weakness marked by poverty, a large population, and instability—are better predictors of which countries are at risk for civil war than are indicators of ethnic and religious diversity or measures of grievance such as economic inequality....”<sup>50</sup> While this is a compelling argument, state leaders and policy makers should not discount inequality as a factor that may encourage groups or individuals to join an insurgency. Fearon and Laitin also highlight that “intense grievances *are produced by* civil war...” (Emphasis in original).<sup>51</sup> While this statement also has merit, it does not consider that those same grievances may fuel future conflict.

In an effort to measure and compare economic equality, the World Bank maintains the Gini Index. This index is the standard international measurement of each state’s income distribution where an index of zero indicates perfect equality and an index of 100 indicates perfect inequality. The next chapter’s analysis of Nigeria will consider its Gini index as a factor in determining the risk of internal conflict.

### **Demographic Factor Coincidence**

As the evidence presented shows, each demographic factor has the potential for increasing the risk of intrastate conflict. However, it is more likely that a combination of two or more of these demographic factors, rather than any one experienced in isolation

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<sup>47</sup> Kofi Annan, “Peace and Development: One Struggle, Two Fronts” (Address, Address to World Bank Staff, Washington, DC, October 19, 1999), <http://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/united-nations-secretary-general-kofi-annan-address-world-bank-staff-peace-and>.

<sup>48</sup> Gudrun Østby, “Polarization, Horizontal Inequalities and Violent Civil Conflict,” *Journal of Peace Research* 45, no. 2 (2008): 143, 157.

<sup>49</sup> Halvard Buhaug, Lars-Erik Cederman, and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, “Square Pegs in Round Holes: Inequalities, Grievances, and Civil War,” *International Studies Quarterly* 58 (2014): 429.

<sup>50</sup> James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 1 (February 2003): 88.

<sup>51</sup> Fearon and Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War,” 88.

will increase the risk of conflict. Professor Colin Gray argued, “future conflict will not truly have...distinctive contexts [such as political, social-cultural, and economic]; rather it will have one mega-context that combines all elements...”<sup>52</sup> To be sure, the state of each of these demographic factors has the potential to influence another. For example, a large youth bulge can cause high unemployment rates and subsequent economic inequality. Alternatively, a large number of educated young people that move to a city in search of work may not find any. It is plausible to see how any of these circumstances may cause frustration, discontent, and increase conflict risk.

Jennifer Sciubba identified “a robust correlation between youth bulges and armed conflict, especially under conditions of economic stagnation...”<sup>53</sup> Urdal found that urban areas might have a disproportionate and crowded youth cohort, which increases the risk of civil violence of many forms (As cited by Sciubba).<sup>54</sup> Goldstone concluded, “The coincidence of youth bulges with rapid urbanization, especially in the context of unemployment and poverty, is an important contributor to political violence” (As cited by Urdal).<sup>55</sup> As is the case for each of these factors, context matters. Sciubba commented, “A problem occurs when job creation and economic growth are unable to keep pace with urban growth, thereby creating grievances, which can lead to violence and instability.”<sup>56</sup>

### **Governance**

Although rapid population growth and demographic pressure are important indicators of conflict, governance is the main contextual factor that determines the incidence or absence of rebellion. How can the United States assess a state’s quality of governance objectively? The following is an excerpt from the United Nations description of governance:

In the community of nations, governance is considered “good” and “democratic” to the degree in which a country’s institutions and processes are transparent. Its processes include such key activities as elections and

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<sup>52</sup> Colin S. Gray, “The 21st Century Security Environment and the Future of War,” *Parameters*, Winter (2008): 19.

<sup>53</sup> Sciubba, *The Future Faces of War*, 12.

<sup>54</sup> Sciubba, *The Future Faces of War*, 119.

<sup>55</sup> Henrick Urdal, “Youth Bulges and Violence,” in *Political Demography: How Population Changes Are Reshaping International Security and National Politics*, ed. Jack A. Goldstone (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 123.

<sup>56</sup> Sciubba, *The Future Faces of War*, 119.

legal procedures, which must be seen to be free of corruption and accountable to the people. Good governance promotes equity, participation, pluralism, transparency, accountability and the rule of law, in a manner that is effective, efficient and enduring. The greatest threats to good governance come from corruption, violence and poverty, all of which undermine transparency, security, participation and fundamental freedoms. Democratic governance advances development, by bringing its energies to bear on such tasks as eradicating poverty, protecting the environment, ensuring gender equality, and providing for sustainable livelihoods. It ensures that civil society plays an active role in setting priorities and making the needs of the most vulnerable people in society known. In fact, well-governed countries are less likely to be violent and less likely to be poor. When the alienated are allowed to speak and their human rights are protected, they are less likely to turn to violence as a solution. When the poor are given a voice, their governments are more likely to invest in national policies that reduce poverty. In so doing, good governance provides the setting for the equitable distribution of benefits from growth.<sup>57</sup>

The United Nations' description provides a standard by which to assess a state's quality of governance. Understanding a state's quality of governance is important when assessing the risk of conflict under conditions of demographic pressure. For example, Sciubba stated, "In most instances, urbanization contributes positively to state and individual security, but can increase vulnerability for both parties in areas with weak governance."<sup>58</sup> Lionel Beehner from the Council on Foreign Relations wrote, "Demographers are quick to stress that youth bulges do not solely explain these civil conflicts—corruption, ethno-religious tensions, poverty, and poor political institutions also play contributing roles...."<sup>59</sup> The notion described here is that governance affects each of the identified demographic factors and can influence each in terms of their influence on the risk of conflict.

Another measure of a state's governance quality comes from the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project, which is a research dataset managed by the National Resource Governance Institute, the Brookings Institution, and the World Bank. The WGI tracks aggregate and individual governance indicators (beginning in 1996) for

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<sup>57</sup> *Governance*, Global Issues (United Nations), accessed May 5, 2015, <http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/governance/>.

<sup>58</sup> Sciubba, *The Future Faces of War*, 112.

<sup>59</sup> Lionel Beehner, "The Effects of Youth Bulge on Civil Conflicts," *Council on Foreign Relations*, April 27, 2007, 2, <http://www.cfr.org/world/effects-youth-bulge-civil-conflicts/p13093>.

the following six dimensions: (1) Voice and Accountability, (2) Political Stability and Absence of Violence, (3) Government Effectiveness, (4) Regulatory Quality, (5) Rule of Law, and (6) Control of Corruption. WGI assigns each state a percentile rank, which indicates that state's world ranking, with 100 corresponding to the highest rank. An example of a state considered to have good governance is Norway, which in 2013 ranked in the 90 to 100th percentile for each of the WGI's six dimensions. By comparison, Nigeria ranked poorly on this scale as all six dimensions are in the 30th percentile or lower.<sup>60</sup> With a general understanding of the relationship between demographic factors and intrastate conflict, and the definition of governance, Chapter 3 investigates the application to Nigeria.



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<sup>60</sup> *Worldwide Governance Indicators* (The World Bank), accessed May 5, 2015, <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#countryReports>.

## Chapter 3

### Nigerian Population Growth, Demographics, and Conflict

*For us to plan properly, we must manage our population...*

Goodluck Jonathan  
President of Nigeria

This study's hypothesis is that Nigeria's population growth and its impact on youth bulge, unemployment, urbanization, and economic inequality will cause or correlate with internal conflict. Additionally, the influence of governance upon demographically stressed states will be investigated. The previous chapter examined how each of these demographic factors increases the risk of conflict. Professor Jack Goldstone found that "While overall population growth and population density do not generally predict political risks, a number of distinct kinds of demographic changes...do appear to increase the risks of violent internal political and ethnic conflicts."<sup>1</sup> In the same study, Goldstone discovered "evidence that countries with larger populations have greater risks of both armed conflict and state repression."<sup>2</sup> This chapter will (1) apply the evidence of population growth and demographic factors increasing the risk of conflict to Nigeria, (2) consider the impact of combining these factors on the risk of conflict, and (3) discuss Nigeria's governance quality and provide potential mitigating solutions for the Nigerian government.

Nigeria has experienced significant internal conflict since gaining its independence, including that fomented by the internationally recognized terrorist group Boko Haram. The group has gained worldwide attention because of its ruthless methods, which include the use of teenage girls and young women for suicide bombings in public locations.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, conflict has occurred in Nigeria's Niger River delta region related to disagreements over oil revenue. For example, in September 2004 an anti-oil industry civil militia group known as the Niger Delta Volunteer Force threatened the state with an assault, which contributed to the rise of the international oil price to a record high

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<sup>1</sup> Jack A. Goldstone, "Population and Security: How Demographic Change Can Lead to Violent Conflict," *Journal of International Affairs* 56, no. 1 (2002): 4–5.

<sup>2</sup> Goldstone, "Population and Security: How Demographic Change Can Lead to Violent Conflict," 5.

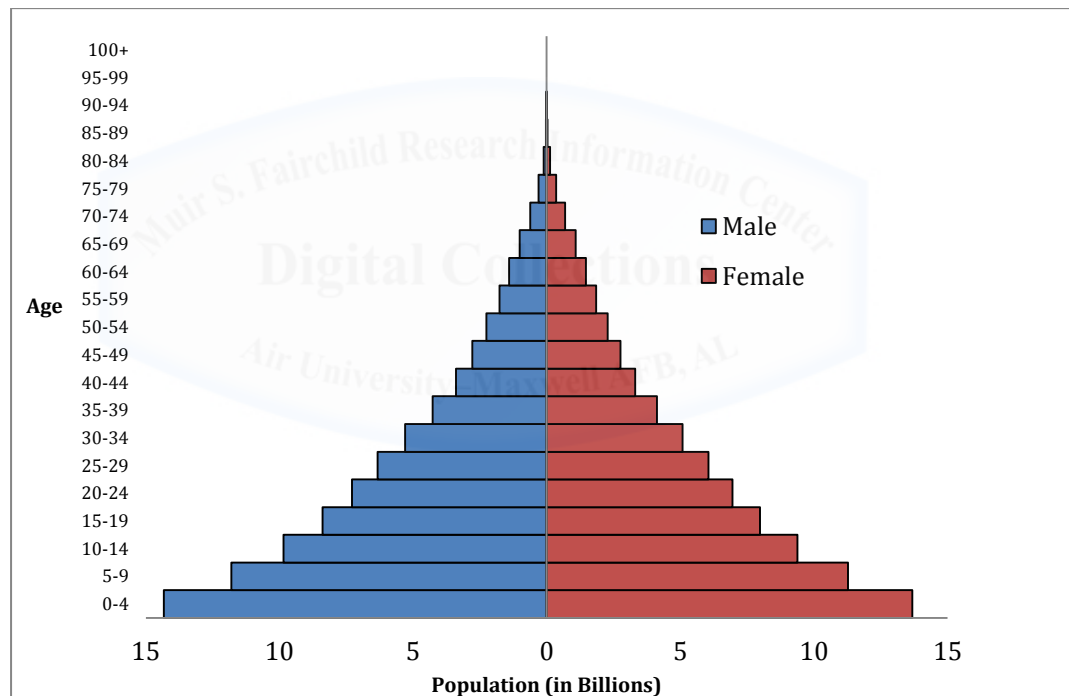
<sup>3</sup> "Girl Bomber Kills 5 in Northeastern Nigerian Market," *New York Times*, February 23, 2015, Online edition, [http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/02/23/world/africa/ap-af-boko-haram.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/02/23/world/africa/ap-af-boko-haram.html?_r=0).

level.<sup>4</sup> These examples of intrastate conflict are relevant here given Henrik Urdal's 2006 study, which claimed that recent conflicts might predict new conflict.<sup>5</sup>

## Nigeria's Demographic Factors

### Youth Bulge

Nigeria's population age composition reveals a youth bulge. The United Nations (UN) World Population Prospects shows that young adults (ages 15-29) in Nigeria comprise 48 percent of the adult population (15 and older) (42.97 million out of 89.4 million).<sup>6</sup> See Figure 1 for an illustrated breakout of Nigeria's age structure.



**Figure 4: Nigeria Age Structure**

*Source: Adapted from data collected from the United Nations Population Division.*

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Omeje, "The Egbesu and Bakassi Boys: African Spiritism and the Mystical Re-Traditionalisation of Security," in *Civil Militia: Africa's Intractable Security Menace?*, ed. David J. Francis (Aldershot, Hants, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 71.

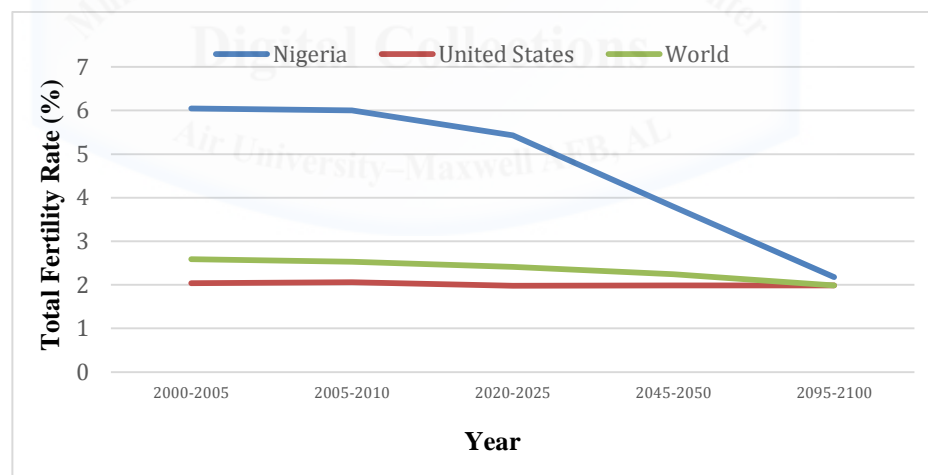
<sup>5</sup> Henrik Urdal, "Youth Bulges and Violence," in *Political Demography: How Population Changes Are Reshaping International Security and National Politics*, ed. Jack A. Goldstone (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 619.

<sup>6</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Age Composition* (United Nations Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2012), <http://esa.un.org/wpp/Excel-Data/population.htm>.



Evidence in the literature shows the youth bulge demographic increases the risk for conflict.<sup>7</sup> As described in the last chapter, a 2003 Population Action International (PAI) study posited a correlation between youth bulge and conflict based on unemployed young men with too much free time.<sup>8</sup> This study found states where young adults comprise more than 40 percent of the adult population were 2.3 times as likely to experience civil conflict.<sup>9</sup> This 40 percent threshold was determined with data collected from 145 states from 1990 to 2000.<sup>10</sup>

The fact that 44 percent of Nigeria's population is fourteen years old or less, combined with a high total fertility rate, indicates that the youth bulge will be present for the foreseeable future. Total fertility rate is the average number of children that would be born per woman if all women lived to the end of their childbearing years and bore children according to a given fertility rate. Rates above two indicate growing populations with declining median ages.<sup>11</sup> The following chart illustrates current and projected total fertility rates for Nigeria, the United States, and the world average.<sup>12</sup>



**Figure 5: Total Fertility Rate**

*Source: Adapted from UN World Population Prospects Data.*

<sup>7</sup> Richard Paul Cincotta, *The Security Demographic: Population and Civil Conflict After the Cold War* (Washington, D.C: Population Action International, 2003), 42–49.

<sup>8</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 44.

<sup>9</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 48.

<sup>10</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 48.

<sup>11</sup> *The World Factbook* (Central Intelligence Agency), accessed February 23, 2015, <https://www.cia.gov>.

<sup>12</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*, 2012.



Nigeria's current median age is 17.8 years and by 2050 the median age will rise slightly to 21.4 years.<sup>13</sup> By comparison, the current US median age is 37.4 and the world median age is 29.2.<sup>14</sup> The projected median ages for the US and the World for 2050 are 40.6 and 36.1, respectively.<sup>15</sup> This comparison helps to illustrate the youthfulness of Nigeria's population. By 2050, Nigeria will have the world's fifth youngest population.<sup>16</sup>

A youthful age structure and continued high fertility likely translate to a high dependency ratio (which indicates the burden on the working population (ages 15-64) to support those under age 15 and over age 64). The closer this number is to 100, the higher the dependency. Nigeria's dependency ratio is 89, considered high.<sup>17</sup> A high dependency ratio places a significant burden on the working class to support these dependents. High unemployment rates further create problems, as jobless individuals have no means to provide needed support. This creates a situation that may increase the risk of conflict.

## Unemployment

Nigeria's current and projected unemployment rate, exacerbated by population growth, increases the risk of internal conflict. Nigeria's current estimated unemployment rate is 23.9 percent.<sup>18</sup> The unemployment rate is projected to reach 29.6 percent by 2020, and hold steady at that level through 2050.<sup>19</sup> Nigeria's unemployment is highest among the youth population. In their 2014 paper, Oluwasola E. Omoju and Terfa W. Abraham from the Research Division of the National Institute for Legislative Studies in Nigeria, cited a 2012 study (Okafor 2011) which stated, "about 64 million youths were unemployed or underemployed in the country, while noting that in 2008, only 10 [percent] of Nigerian graduates got paid employment in the country."<sup>20</sup> The same 2014

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<sup>13</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables* (United Nations Population Division), 30, [http://esa.un.org/wpp/documentation/pdf/wpp2012\\_%20key%20findings.pdf](http://esa.un.org/wpp/documentation/pdf/wpp2012_%20key%20findings.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables*, 28–31.

<sup>15</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables*, 28–31.

<sup>16</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables*, 27.

<sup>17</sup> *Age Dependency Ratio* (The World Bank, 2013), <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.DPND>.

<sup>18</sup> *The World Factbook*.

<sup>19</sup> *Nigeria Unemployment Rate Forecast* (Trading Economics), accessed February 23, 2015, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/nigeria/unemployment-rate/forecast>.

<sup>20</sup> Oluwasola E. Omoju and Terfa W. Abraham, "Youth Bulge and Demographic Dividend in Nigeria," *African Population Studies* 27, no. 2 Supp (March 2014): 355.

paper cited another study (Akinyemi, Ofem and Ikuenomore, 2012) which claimed that “graduate unemployment increased from 25.6 [percent] in 2003 to 40.3 [percent] in 2009.”<sup>21</sup>

Unemployed youth are ripe for recruitment into armed rebellions, militia groups, or terrorist groups. These groups understand that an unemployed young man in Nigeria may be desperate for income and willing to engage in rebellious or terrorist activities to earn a living. There is evidence that Boko Haram provides monetary rewards, including direct payments in some cases, to recruit members.<sup>22</sup> Recruitment is likely easier in areas of high unemployment due to low opportunity costs. Individuals targeted for recruitment may feel that they have no better choice than to join an armed rebellion to support themselves and their families.

## **Urbanization**

The world’s urban population continues to grow. By 2025, the population of Lagos, Nigeria, is projected to be 25 million, making it the world’s third largest city after Mumbai and Tokyo.<sup>23</sup> Urbanization is generally a positive trend as cities draw citizens from rural areas seeking higher incomes, employment opportunities, education, and health care.<sup>24</sup> However, rapid urban growth causes problems when states do not anticipate growth by building the necessary infrastructure. In addition, rapid urban growth can raise the risk of internal state conflict. Nigeria’s high urban growth rate and the projected population of its cities increase the risk of conflict, especially when combined with unemployment, economic inequality, and insufficient governance. Peter Gizewski and Thomas Homer-Dixon from the University of Toronto suggested urban growth requires interaction with other factors such as economic recession to result in conflict.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Omoju and Abraham, “Youth Bulge and Demographic Dividend in Nigeria,” 355.

<sup>22</sup> Hakeem Onapajo and Ufo Okeke Uzodike, “Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria: Man, the State, and the International System,” *African Security Review* 21, no. 3 (September 2012): 31.

<sup>23</sup> Pelu Awofeso, “One Out of Every Two Nigerians Now Lives in a City: There Are Many Problems But Just One Solution,” *World Policy Journal*, Winter 2011, 68.

<sup>24</sup> *The Challenge of Slums* (Sterling, VA: United Nations Settlements Programme, 2003), 25.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Gizewski and Thomas Homer-Dixon, *Urban Growth and Violence: Will the Future Resemble the Past?*, 11–15.

Between 1990 and 2014, the percentage of Nigeria's population residing in urban areas grew dramatically from 30 percent to 47 percent.<sup>26</sup> The United Nations projects that number to grow to 67 percent by 2050.<sup>27</sup> According to World Bank data, Nigeria ranks number 16 on the list of states with the highest urban population growth with an annual rate of 4.7 percent.<sup>28</sup> With an annual growth rate above 4 percent, Nigeria is about twice as likely to sustain the outbreak of a civil conflict as a country below this threshold.<sup>29</sup> This 4 percent threshold was determined by the 2003 Population Action International study conducted from 1990 to 2000.<sup>30</sup>

### **Economic Inequality**

The relatively high level of Nigeria's economic inequality also increases the risk of conflict. One method for measuring and comparing levels of economic equality between states is the World Bank's Gini index. The Gini index measures state income distribution; an index of zero is perfect equality and 100 is perfect inequality. Nigeria's 2010 Gini index was 43.<sup>31</sup> Of 64 states assigned a Gini index by the World Bank, Nigeria ranked number 49.<sup>32</sup> In other words, of the 64 states, only 15 were more unequal than Nigeria. For comparison, the US 2010 index was 41.1 and ranked number 45.<sup>33</sup>

Another method of determining inequality is to measure and compare a state's percentage loss in the Inequality-Adjusted Human Development Index. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a measure for assessing long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living. Nigeria's current HDI value is 0.504 and considered to be in

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<sup>26</sup> *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision, Highlights* (United Nations Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, June 2014), 21, <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Highlights/WUP2014-Highlights.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision*, 21.

<sup>28</sup> *Urban Population Growth* (The World Bank), accessed February 24, 2015, [http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.GROW?order=wbapi\\_data\\_value\\_2013+wbapi\\_data\\_value+wbapi\\_data\\_value-last&sort=desc](http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.GROW?order=wbapi_data_value_2013+wbapi_data_value+wbapi_data_value-last&sort=desc).

<sup>29</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 55.

<sup>30</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 48.

<sup>31</sup> *GINI Index* (The World Bank), accessed February 27, 2015, <http://data.worldbank.org>.

<sup>32</sup> *GINI Index*.

<sup>33</sup> *GINI Index*.

the low human development category.<sup>34</sup> By comparison, the US HDI is 0.914 and considered very high in the human development category.<sup>35</sup> The Inequality-Adjusted HDI (IHDI) considers inequality in the distribution of human development across the population at the state level. When Nigeria's HDI of 0.504 is discounted for inequality, it falls to 0.300, which is a loss of 40.3 percent.<sup>36</sup> Again, for comparison, the US IHDI is 0.755, a loss of 17.4 percent from its HDI.<sup>37</sup> The average loss due to inequality for low HDI countries is 32.6 percent and for Sub-Saharan Africa it is 33.6 percent.<sup>38</sup> Nigeria ranks well below this level, and highlights inequality among the population.

The World Bank defines the poverty line in the poorest countries as \$1.25 a day per person. However, there is a significant contrast in the number of people living below the poverty line in the different regions of Nigeria. For example, the South West region's poverty rate is 16 percent, while the rate for the North East is 50.2 percent. See Table 1 below, which includes data gathered from general household surveys.<sup>39</sup>

**Table 1: Nigeria Poverty Rates Per Capita (Percent of Population by Region)**

|               |      |
|---------------|------|
| National      | 33.1 |
| Rural         | 44.9 |
| Urban         | 12.6 |
| North Central | 31.1 |
| North East    | 50.2 |
| North West    | 45.9 |
| South East    | 28.8 |
| South South   | 24.4 |
| South West    | 16.0 |

*Source: Adapted from the Nigeria Economic Report, The World Bank, 2 Jul 14.*

Kate Meagher, a lecturer at the London School of Economics, identified that “Despite a national income averaging \$1,500 per head, qualifying Nigeria as a middle-income country, the common people face unemployment rates that reached

<sup>34</sup> *Human Development Report 2014, Nigeria* (United Nations Development Programme), accessed February 23, 2015, <http://hdr.undp.org/en>.

<sup>35</sup> *Human Development Report 2014, Nigeria*.

<sup>36</sup> *Human Development Report 2014, Nigeria*.

<sup>37</sup> *Human Development Report 2014, Nigeria*.

<sup>38</sup> *Human Development Report 2014, Nigeria*.

<sup>39</sup> *Nigeria Economic Report* (The World Bank, July 2, 2014), 17, <http://www-wds.worldbank.org>.

[approximately] 24 percent in 2011, and steadily rising poverty that currently leaves 61 percent of the population struggling to live on less than \$1 a day.”<sup>40</sup> Nigeria’s per capita gross domestic product (GDP) has grown from \$2,310 in 2010 to \$3,005 in 2013.<sup>41</sup> However, Yemi Kale of the National Bureau of Statistics said, “While it [GDP] depicts how rich a nation is, this is not necessarily the same as showing how rich the individuals in the nation are, due to the problem of unequal distribution of wealth...”<sup>42</sup> And, as Elizabeth Leahy points out, “militant rebels [in Nigeria] angry about the distribution of oil revenue have conducted a series of attacks against the industry....”<sup>43</sup>

### **Combining Nigeria’s Demographic Factors**

The combination of two or more of these demographic factors is an important consideration when predicting the risk of internal conflict in Nigeria. For example, Henrik Urdal’s 2006 study concluded that when a youth bulge is combined with high fertility and high dependency, it increases the likelihood for armed conflict.<sup>44</sup> Some demographic factors may adversely interact with other factors as well. Frustrated unemployed youth residing in rural areas may migrate to Nigerian cities in the hope of a steady income. As city populations grow however, available job opportunities must also grow or else frustration may increase, as families must survive living in cramped and squalid conditions. These conditions may increase the risk of violent conflict or even recruitment for terrorism or state rebellions.

Unemployment and economic inequality may be related, again depending on the country’s overall circumstances. Nigeria’s exceedingly high numbers for each of these factors should be a concern for both the state itself, and the international community. Ted Robert Gurr’s “relative deprivation” theory is appropriate to describe a combination

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<sup>40</sup> Kate Meagher, “The Jobs Crisis Behind Nigeria’s Unrest,” *Current History* 112, no. 754 (May 2013): 169.

<sup>41</sup> *Gross Domestic Product Per Capita* (The World Bank), accessed April 26, 2015, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>.

<sup>42</sup> “Nigeria Becomes Africa’s Largest Economy – Get the Data,” *The Guardian*, accessed February 24, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/datablog/2014/apr/07/nigeria-becomes-africa-largest-economy-get-data>.

<sup>43</sup> Elizabeth Leahy, *Demographic Development: Reversing Course?*, Research Commentary (Population Action International, November 2006), 1, <http://pai.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/DemoDev.pdf>.

<sup>44</sup> Urdal, “A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence,” 619.

of unemployment and economic inequality.<sup>45</sup> A young unemployed Nigerian man, especially one that has attained some level of education, may feel deprived of what he feels he is capable of achieving. This feeling of deprivation may increase when that man compares his living conditions with that of another in a more affluent state region. Ruben Thorning summarized Gurr's conclusions by writing, "violence erupts when people feel deprived."<sup>46</sup>

Jennifer Sciubba echoed the benefit of a holistic approach when analyzing multiple demographic factors and the potential for an increased risk of conflict when she wrote, "population has real and measurable effects on national security, but numbers carry little information on their own; they need context."<sup>47</sup> Sciubba also cited multiple studies when she claimed that "analyzing demography by itself would greatly [over predict] conflict."<sup>48</sup> These comments convey that to determine Nigerian demographic factors' true influence on the risk of conflict, each factor must be analyzed within the context of a state's overall circumstances. An important contextual factor is the quality of governance. Given Nigeria's past and current relatively poor governance, the state must work to build stability.

### **Nigeria's Governance and Recommendations**

The Nigerian government can take specific action in the short and long term to mitigate its risk of conflict. In the short term, Nigeria can make government processes such as elections as transparent as possible. Citizens' trust in government will likely increase as transparency increases, as they may feel more comfortable with the government's policies. Also in the short term, Nigeria can rid the state government of corruption. Removing corruption from all levels of government is likely a longer-term prospect as this will include replacement of wrongdoers and training of new personnel.

Probably a longer-term solution, job creation is critical to Nigeria's success, and one that can positively impact each of the four demographic factors. Providing jobs,

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<sup>45</sup> Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, 24.

<sup>46</sup> Ruben Thorning, "Civil Militias: Indonesia and Nigeria in Comparative Perspective," in *Civil Militia: Africa's Intractable Security Menace?*, ed. David J. Francis (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 92.

<sup>47</sup> Jennifer Dabbs Sciubba, *The Future Faces of War: Population and National Security*, The Changing Face of War (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2011), 2.

<sup>48</sup> Sciubba, *The Future Faces of War*, 2–3, 11.



especially for young people, can help reduce unemployment rates, ease the strain of urbanization, and potentially mitigate economic inequality. A. A. Akanni, from the Department of Psychology, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, believed that job creation for unemployed youth will reduce terrorist attacks in Nigeria.<sup>49</sup> Despite state efforts to match education to labor market needs and promote youth employment, there remains a skills mismatch, and youth unemployment continues to rise.<sup>50</sup>

Although Nigeria is the largest oil-producing state in Sub-Saharan Africa, profits are not distributed equitably across the state. For example, the desperately poor and underdeveloped Niger Delta produces over 90 percent of the state's crude oil.<sup>51</sup> Efforts by residents of the Niger Delta to retain control over oil revenues have been rejected by the government for fear that would increase economic disparities between this oil-rich region and the rest of the country.<sup>52</sup> One potential solution is to make efforts to distribute oil revenues better, potentially through taxes and subsidies, in order to mitigate the state's economic inequality. Daniel A. Tonwe and Surulola J. Eke, lecturers in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Benin, Nigeria, claimed, "the inability of the political class to translate the country's enormous resources into better living standards for this people, which deepened the already-existing legitimacy crisis of the central authority, have equally created the Boko Haram monster that has made the country even more insecure."<sup>53</sup> Through job creation and more equitable wealth distribution, the government can reduce poverty, especially in cities. T.P. Ogun, from the Department of Psychology, Obafemi Awolowo University, found that although policy has largely focused on reducing poverty in rural areas, Nigeria must take action to reduce poverty in urban areas, given the high rural-to-urban migration rates.<sup>54</sup> The state must build and maintain its current urban infrastructure, as well as plan for projected rapid urban population growth.

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<sup>49</sup> A. A. Akanni, "History of Terrorism, Youth Psychology and Unemployment in Nigeria," *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 7, no. 3 (September 2014): 75.

<sup>50</sup> *IHS Jane's Sentinel: Country Risk Assessments, West Africa*, 2014.

<sup>51</sup> *Polity IV Country Report 2010: Nigeria* (Center for Systemic Peace, 2010), 4, <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/Nigeria2010.pdf>.

<sup>52</sup> *Polity IV Country Report 2010: Nigeria*, 4.

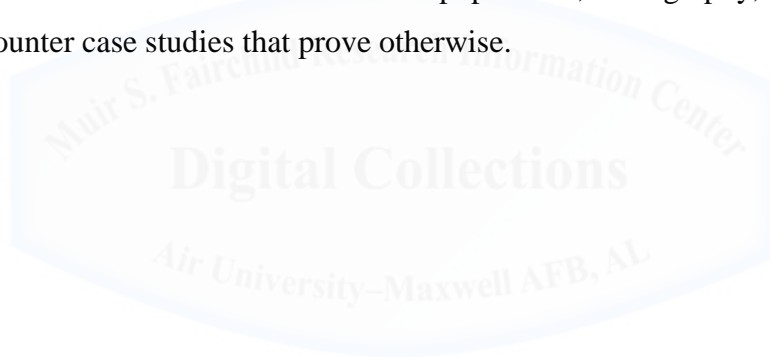
<sup>53</sup> Daniel A. Tonwe and Surulola J. Eke, "State Fragility and Violent Uprisings in Nigeria," *African Security Review* 22, no. 4 (November 2013): 234.

<sup>54</sup> T.P. Ogun, "Infrastructure and Poverty Reduction: Implications for Urban Development in Nigeria," *Urban Forum* 21 (May 29, 2010): 263.

Finally, Nigeria should increase security for its citizens against the growing threat of Boko Haram. This would benefit citizens who may experience pressure to cooperate with the terrorist group. This would also benefit the state, which could face an ever-growing adversary due to recruitment. An increased security presence could also prevent or minimize the risk of ethnic or sectarian conflict.

### **Conclusion**

By applying the evidence and theories from the literature to Nigeria's current and projected circumstances, it appears the potential for conflict exists. The combination of these demographic factors may also exacerbate this potential. To mitigate this risk, the Nigerian government must make certain changes to alleviate the pressure of these population-influenced demographic factors. The next chapter includes several case studies to illustrate the connection between population, demography, and conflict, and several counter case studies that prove otherwise.





## Chapter 4

### Case Studies

*One would have thought that it was even more necessary to limit population than property. The neglect of this subject, which in existing states is so common, is a never-failing cause of poverty among the citizens; and poverty is the parent of revolution and crime.*

Aristotle

The previous chapters introduced the concept of population growth and its influence on demographic factors that increase the potential for conflict, along with how Nigeria's current and projected situation fits these criteria. This chapter explores multiple case studies that provide evidence of the population-influenced demographic factors of youth bulge, unemployment, urbanization, and economic inequality causing or correlating with internal state conflict. The studies include the following: (1) the English Revolution, (2) the French Revolution, (3) the Tajikistan civil war, (4) political violence in Indonesia, (5) the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, and (6) Pacific Island conflict. Each case study illustrates how a combination of two or more of these demographic factors caused or correlated with conflict or violence, along with summary of these case studies' similarity to Nigeria's circumstances.

Following these case studies are three counter-case studies in which rapid population growth and at least two of the demographic factors are present, but did not result in, or coincide with, conflict. These counter case studies include the following: (1) Singapore, (2) Malaysia, and (3) Botswana. The hypothesis being that governance distinguishes the first set of case studies from the counter case studies. The United Nations believes good governance promotes equity, participation, pluralism, transparency, accountability, and the rule of law, while threats to good governance come from corruption, violence, and poverty, which undermine transparency, security, participation and fundamental freedoms.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "United Nations Global Issues," accessed April 12, 2015, <http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/governance/>.

## Case Studies

### English Revolution

The English Revolution provides an example of how rapid population growth and the combination of a youth bulge, unemployment, and urbanization can ignite conflict. In his book, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, Sociologist Jack A. Goldstone described the beginning of the English Revolution as follows:

From 1639 to 1642, England experienced the characteristic elements of state breakdown: a state crisis, as Englishmen refused to pay the Ship Money levies in 1639 following the army's failure to defeat the Scots, leaving the government bankrupt; an elite rebellion, as many county leaders refused to obey the king's writs to join the Royal Army, instead cooperating with Parliament to raise an alternative force; and popular disorders, as merchants, shopkeepers, and craftsmen forcibly wrested control of London from the aldermen, as crowds in the city prevented the bishops from attending Parliament and forced the king and his family to leave London for fear of violence, as rural riots in the fens and Crown forests frightened conservative elites while anti-Catholic riots intimidated the king's supporters, and as large-scale uprisings threatened royal authority and English landlords in Ireland. By 1642, English, Scots, and Irish were choosing sides...in what would become a civil war between royalist and parliamentary forces. These events mark the opening stages of what is called the Great Rebellion or the English Revolution.<sup>2</sup>

England experienced significant loss to the Black Death when the population fell from approximately 4.8 to 2.6 million between 1348 and 1351.<sup>3</sup> Multiple plague recurrences into the fifteenth century continued to affect England's population.<sup>4</sup> The sixteenth century and forward however saw resurgence in England's population. Goldstone cites two studies (Wrigley and Schofield, 1981 and Cornwall, 1970), which noted that England's population grew from just over two million in 1500 to over five million in 1650.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Jack A. Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 63.

<sup>3</sup> Sharon DeWitte and Philip Slavin, "Between Famine and Death: England on the Eve of the Black Death-Evidence from Paleoepidemiology and Manorial Accounts," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 44, no. 1 (2013): 37.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Mike Ibeji, *Black Death* (British Broadcasting Company Online), accessed March 20, 2015, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/middle\\_ages/black\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/middle_ages/black_01.shtml).

<sup>5</sup> Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, 83.

As is commonly associated with rapid population growth, England experienced a youth bulge during this period. The large youth population came with an increased risk of internal conflict. Goldstone commented, “The extraordinary youthfulness of England’s population in the 1630s...very likely contributed to the mobilization potential of the population.”<sup>6</sup>

England also experienced significant urban population growth, especially in London, which became a problem due to the lack of available jobs. Goldstone claimed “From 1500 to 1640, London grew eightfold, from fifty thousand to four hundred thousand inhabitants. Had...employment opportunities been plentiful, such growth need not have posed difficulties.”<sup>7</sup> This eightfold increase across 140 years was a 5 percent annual urban population growth rate.<sup>8</sup> As described in Chapter 1, a 2003 Population Action International report found that states with urban population growth rates above 4 percent were about twice as likely to sustain the outbreak of civil conflict.”<sup>9</sup> Goldstone also suggested “The faster London [grew], the lower the level of real wages, and the greater the percentage of the population in the young ages, the greater the likelihood of mass mobilization for urban protests.”<sup>10</sup>

The presence of these demographic pressures increased the risk of conflict while government leaders were unable to appease the masses and prevent a revolution. Reflecting on the circumstances in 17th Century England, Goldstone wrote, “Cities are particularly explosive during eras when population growth collides with limited economic and state resources, for it is when real wages fall and urban police administrations have difficulty keeping pace with urban expansion that the mobilization potential of urban crowds is most likely to be realized.”<sup>11</sup> This example highlights the importance of building infrastructure commensurate with expected growth.

The English Revolution’s rapid population growth and the combination of youth bulge, unemployment, and urbanization provide a useful 17th Century comparison to 21st

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<sup>6</sup> Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, 138.

<sup>7</sup> Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, 135.

<sup>8</sup>  $\frac{((400,000 - 50,000) / 50,000) \times 100}{140} = 5$ .

<sup>9</sup> Richard Paul Cincotta, *The Security Demographic: Population and Civil Conflict After the Cold War* (Washington, D.C: Population Action International, 2003), 13.

<sup>10</sup> Jack A. Goldstone, “The Origins of the English Revolution: A Demographic Approach,” *Journal of Economic History* 45, no. 2 (June 1985): 457.

<sup>11</sup> Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, 135.

Century Nigeria. Just as England's demographic circumstances increased the likelihood of insurrection, Nigeria's increasing demographic pressures may force the state to fear a similar threat. England's insufficient governance failed to address citizens' concerns and stave off revolution. The threat of armed rebellion is a concern for Nigeria given the terror group Boko Haram's declared holy jihad on the state.<sup>12</sup> The combination of population growth and demographic pressures should also concern Nigeria because of the evidence of Boko Haram providing monetary incentives to recruit members.<sup>13</sup>

### **French Revolution**

In 1789, Napoleon Bonaparte said, "This year has begun hopefully for right thinkers. After all these centuries of feudal barbarism and political slavery, it is surprising to see how the word of 'liberty' sets minds on fire."<sup>14</sup> Prior to the start of the French Revolution, France was experiencing all four of this study's population-influenced demographic factors: youth bulge, unemployment, urbanization, and economic inequality. Rapid population growth in the eighteenth century was concentrated in France's most densely populated areas.<sup>15</sup> State breakdown in 1789 included a combination of elements: a state fiscal crisis, elite rebellion and intra-elite conflicts, and urban and rural unrest.<sup>16</sup> France was "thrown into crisis by the inability of its economy, its system of taxation, and its mechanisms of elite recruitment to cope with sustained population growth."<sup>17</sup>

Goldstone provided a useful description of French age composition when he wrote, "Demographic change involved aspects other than mere population growth. The population grew markedly younger, as each new generation was slightly larger than its forebears. In 1700 the ratio of those aged ten to twenty-nine years to those thirty and over was probably not more than 6:10...By 1750, the ratio had risen to 8.6:10 and stayed

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<sup>12</sup> Hakeem Onapajo and Ufo Okeke Uzodike, "Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria: Man, the State, and the International System," *African Security Review* 21, no. 3 (September 2012): 25, 27.

<sup>13</sup> Onapajo and Uzodike, "Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria," 31.

<sup>14</sup> Michael B. Colegrove, Ph.D., ed., *Distant Voices: Listening to the Leadership Lessons of the Past, Napoleon Bonaparte's Maxims, Quotes and Life in His Own Words* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse Books, 2005), 38.

<sup>15</sup> Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, 178.

<sup>16</sup> Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, 173.

<sup>17</sup> Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, 173.

near 8:10 for the remainder of the century.”<sup>18</sup> Did this youth bulge cause, or correlate with, conflict? Certainly, there was correlation given the large numbers of youth, but causation, as is often the case, is uncertain. Goldstone claimed “Many historians have noted that [the] enlarged youth cohort contributed to the radical atmosphere and impatience with traditional institutions that existed toward the end of the Old Regime.”<sup>19</sup>

In addition to becoming younger, the urban population also grew significantly.<sup>20</sup> Goldstone cites a 1978 study by Dupaquier who claimed between 1740-1749 to the period 1780-1789, small town populations increased by 24 percent, mid-size towns by 20 percent, and larger cities by 38 percent, compared to rural growth of 8.3 percent.<sup>21</sup> The annual urban population growth rate for larger cities across this period was therefore relatively low at 0.6 percent due to the lengthy 40-year observation period, but the overall urban population growth when compared to rural growth was significant.

Historians cite political, social, and economic circumstances as causes for the French Revolution. Commonly cited reasons include (1) the increasingly wealthy commoners resented exclusion from political power and positions of honor, and (2) the peasants’ awareness of their situation and decreasing willingness to support the “anachronistic and burdensome” feudal system.<sup>22</sup> These reasons reveal the inequities that existed prior to revolution. Regarding economic inequality, Goldstone noted that prior to the French Revolution “Rising prices and a growing market created opportunities for profit, but they were not opportunities that all elements of the populace were equally able to exploit. Many nobles as well as commoners...shared the movement toward greater wealth. But others, in both classes, were left behind.”<sup>23</sup>

As discussed in Chapter 2, Ted Robert Gurr’s “relative deprivation” theory is closely associated with economic inequality. This theory focuses on “actors’ perception of discrepancy between their value expectations (goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are entitled) and their value capabilities (goods and conditions they

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<sup>18</sup> Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, 179.

<sup>19</sup> Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, 247.

<sup>20</sup> Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, 180.

<sup>21</sup> Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, 180.

<sup>22</sup> *French Revolution: 1787-1799* (Encyclopedia Britannica Website), accessed March 21, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/219315/French-Revolution>.

<sup>23</sup> Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*, 232–233.

think they are capable of getting and keeping).”<sup>24</sup> Gurr’s theory applies when determining the influence of economic inequality on the French revolution, especially regarding the exclusion of wealthy commoners from higher positions.

The presence of each of the four population-influenced demographic factors caused, or at least correlated with, violent revolution in late 18th Century France. However, ineffective governance directly contributed to revolution by failing to respond to these demographic pressures. It is valuable to compare 18th Century France to modern day Nigeria in order to assess the implications of a similar failure of governance.

The demographic circumstances in France that correlated with, and potentially caused, state breakdown leading to revolution are similar to modern day Nigeria. France’s telltale youth bulge, unemployment, urbanization, and economic inequality reveal a recipe for conflict. Nigeria is likewise experiencing each of the four population-induced demographic factors. Nigeria, its regional neighbors, and other stakeholders, should heed this more than 200-year-old warning and take action if they wish to avoid similar government upheaval.

### **Tajikistan Civil War**

Evidence from this next case study illustrates how a mobilized youth bulge provided combatants for the ideology-based Tajikistan Civil War. Following the breakup of the Soviet Union, Tajikistan gained its independence in 1991. A five-year civil war (1992-1997) between the Moscow-backed government and the Islamist-led opposition killed up to 50,000 people and drove over one-tenth of the population from their homes. A 2001 article published in *The Washington Review of Turkish and Eurasian Affairs* concluded, “In the case of Tajikistan, the departure of Soviet patronage at the end of 1992 created a power vacuum that accelerated the processes which eventually led to the civil war.”<sup>25</sup> The conflict ended in 1997 with a United Nations-brokered peace agreement.<sup>26</sup> Doctor Sophie Roche from the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology cited

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<sup>24</sup> Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1970), 24.

<sup>25</sup> Wilder Bullard, “All Against All: The Tajik Civil War (1991-1997),” *The Washington Review of Turkish and Eurasian Affairs*, November 2011, <http://www.thewashingtonreview.org/articles/all-against-all-the-tajik-civil-war.html>.

<sup>26</sup> *Tajikistan Profile - Overview* (British Broadcasting Company News, November 11, 2014), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-16201032>.



multiple studies when she claimed, “When the [Tajik] civil war broke out, many observers agreed that the combination of population explosion, rival ideologies [Islam and Communism], regional rivalry, and economic problems had [fueled] the conflict.”<sup>27</sup>

During this period, Tajikistan had a sizable youth bulge. In 1992, Tajikistan’s percentage of young adults in the population of adults was 47.9 percent.<sup>28</sup> In addition, Tajikistan’s age dependency ratio in 1992 was 92.6 percent, considered very high.<sup>29</sup> Although the current study found no evidence of a quantitative relationship between the age dependency ratio and conflict in the literature, Henrik Urdal concluded that large youth bulges with high fertility and high dependency increases a country’s potential for conflict.<sup>30</sup> The dependency factor provides additional insight when attempting to assess the potential for internal state conflict when the other demographic pressures are present.

Regarding the cause for civil war, Roche noted, “The link between young peoples’ military engagement and politics...has largely remained unexplored.”<sup>31</sup> Roche defines the term “vanguardism” as “the effort to mobilize a maximum number of young people for a political cause by manipulating concepts of youth. In other words, vanguardism serves a specific purpose and does not apply to just any youth group.”<sup>32</sup> The vanguard concept explains why, in some contexts, young people under similar economic conditions engage in violent mass activities while in other contexts they do not.”<sup>33</sup> Roche believed “the political manipulation of cultural youth categories under a vanguard ideology successfully turns young people into violent actors, as was the case on the eve of the Tajik civil war.”<sup>34</sup> The Islamic Revival Party (IRP) provided young people with an option to gain power and turned large numbers of youth into combatants for the

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<sup>27</sup> Sophie Roche, “From Youth Bulge to Conflict: The Case of Tajikistan,” *Central Asian Survey* 29, no. 4 (December 2010): 407.

<sup>28</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*, 2012.

<sup>29</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*, 2012.

<sup>30</sup> Henrick Urdal, “Youth Bulges and Violence,” in *Political Demography: How Population Changes Are Reshaping International Security and National Politics*, ed. Jack A. Goldstone (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 619.

<sup>31</sup> Roche, “From Youth Bulge to Conflict: The Case of Tajikistan,” 407.

<sup>32</sup> Roche, “From Youth Bulge to Conflict: The Case of Tajikistan,” 409.

<sup>33</sup> Roche, “From Youth Bulge to Conflict: The Case of Tajikistan,” 409.

<sup>34</sup> Roche, “From Youth Bulge to Conflict: The Case of Tajikistan,” 409.

Islamic cause.”<sup>35</sup> Between 1992 and 1997, Tajikistan also suffered high unemployment rates that ranged from a low of 10.4 percent in 1992, to a high of 11.5 percent in 1997.<sup>36</sup>

Poor governance, along with rapid population growth, a significant youth bulge, and high unemployment rates caused, or at least correlated with, civil war in Tajikistan. Specifically, the large youth bulge provided the necessary combatants from which to wage this brutal conflict. Just as in Tajikistan, Nigeria’s large population of youth offers potential recruits for terrorist or rebel groups. This large pool of potential combatants is dangerous because of the lack of opportunity costs associated with unemployment, thus making these groups an attractive alternative.

## Indonesia

In 1966, General Suharto took over presidential powers in Indonesia and ruled as a dictator until his resignation in 1998. Indonesia became a democratic state with elections in 1999. Rapid population growth along with both urbanization and economic inequality increased the potential for intrastate violence. In 2011, the *Journal of Development Studies* published a study of “routine” and “episodic” violence between Indonesian provinces from 1990 to 2003.<sup>37</sup> The 2011 study found high rates of population growth increase the risk of routine violence.<sup>38</sup> The high rate of population growth during this period produced a large youth bulge. In 1990 Indonesia’s percentage of young adults in the overall population of adults was 46.5 percent.<sup>39</sup> This proportion of youth exceeds Population Action International’s 2003 study threshold of 40 percent indicating 2.3 times the likelihood of conflict.<sup>40</sup> In addition, the age dependency ratio in 1990 was relatively high at 67.3 percent.<sup>41</sup> This ratio indicates increased burden on the working population.

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<sup>35</sup> Roche, “From Youth Bulge to Conflict: The Case of Tajikistan,” 413.

<sup>36</sup> *Tajikistan Unemployment Rate* (The World Bank), accessed April 3, 2015, [http://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Tajikistan/Unemployment\\_rate/](http://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Tajikistan/Unemployment_rate/).

<sup>37</sup> Gudrun Østby et al., “Population Pressure, Horizontal Inequality and Political Violence: A Disaggregated Study of Indonesian Provinces, 1990-2003,” *Journal of Development Studies* 47, no. 3 (March 2011): 377.

<sup>38</sup> Østby et al., “Population Pressure, Horizontal Inequality and Political Violence: A Disaggregated Study of Indonesian Provinces, 1990-2003,” 395.

<sup>39</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*, 2012.

<sup>40</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 40.

<sup>41</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*, 2012.



The 2011 study also found, “Higher urban shares of the population are generally associated with higher levels of routine violence....”<sup>42</sup> The annual urban population growth rate for Indonesia from 1990 to 2000 was 4.4 percent.<sup>43</sup> The 2003 Population Action International report also found that states with urban population growth rates above 4 percent were about twice as likely to sustain the outbreak of civil conflict.”<sup>44</sup> At 4.4 percent, Indonesia was at risk.

During the same period, Indonesia did not register high levels of inequality at the state level. Indonesia’s Gini index (international inequality rating) was 29.2 in 1990<sup>45</sup> and had no measurable decline in its income-adjusted Human Development Index, which suggests relative equality.<sup>46</sup> However, the same 2011 study claimed that provincial-level inequality existed “in provinces where population growth is high, greater levels of inequality between religious groups appear to increase the risk of routine violence.”<sup>47</sup> Because of the findings, the study cautioned policy-makers to be aware of the potential dangers arising from widening inequalities in areas of high population growth.<sup>48</sup>

Demographic pressure and ineffective governance in Indonesia created an environment of internal conflict. A 2010 report from the Overseas Development Institute claimed “Suharto’s New Order regime ruled the country unencumbered by any effective system of checks and balances, often protecting the interests of a narrow subset of Indonesian society. In the end, expanding gaps between different socioeconomic, cultural and geographic groups of the diverse Indonesian population, aggravated by the economic crisis of 1997/98, became untenable.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Østby et al., “Population Pressure, Horizontal Inequality and Political Violence: A Disaggregated Study of Indonesian Provinces, 1990-2003,” 395.

<sup>43</sup> Tommy Firman, “Demographic Patterns of Indonesia’s Urbanization, 2000-2010: Continuity and Change at the Macro Level,” (School of Architecture, Planning, and Policy Development, Institute of Technology, Bandung, August 2013), 15, [http://iussp.org/sites/default/files/event\\_call\\_for\\_papers/IUSSP,%20PPt,%20August%202013.pdf](http://iussp.org/sites/default/files/event_call_for_papers/IUSSP,%20PPt,%20August%202013.pdf).

<sup>44</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 13.

<sup>45</sup> *GINI Index*.

<sup>46</sup> *Human Development Report 1993* (United Nations Development Programme), 17, accessed March 22, 2015, [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/222/hdr\\_1993\\_en\\_complete\\_nostats.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/222/hdr_1993_en_complete_nostats.pdf).

<sup>47</sup> Østby et al., “Population Pressure, Horizontal Inequality and Political Violence: A Disaggregated Study of Indonesian Provinces, 1990-2003.” 395.

<sup>48</sup> Østby et al., “Population Pressure, Horizontal Inequality and Political Violence: A Disaggregated Study of Indonesian Provinces, 1990-2003.” 395.

<sup>49</sup> Dan Harris and Marta Foresti, *Indonesia’s Progress on Governance: State Cohesion and Strategic Institutional Reform*, 3, accessed April 3, 2015, [http://www.developmentprogress.org/sites/developmentprogress.org/files/indonesia\\_governance.pdf](http://www.developmentprogress.org/sites/developmentprogress.org/files/indonesia_governance.pdf).

Nigeria's current population-induced youth bulge, high urbanization rates, and regional economic inequality are similar to the conditions in Indonesia, which appear to have influenced political violence in from 1990 to 2003. In addition to common demographic pressures, one specific measureable similarity is Indonesia's urban population growth rate of 4.4 percent during the observational period, while Nigeria's current rate is 4.7 percent.<sup>50</sup> Also like Nigeria, Indonesia transitioned to a democracy in 1999. Since its transition, Indonesia continues to work to consolidate its democracy as state institutions struggle to control corruption, improve public services, and protect citizen rights. In Nigeria, the impediment to a strong democracy at all levels of government is conflict, due in part to political competition and ethnic, religious and resource allocation rivalries.<sup>51</sup>

### **Israeli-Palestinian conflict**

On 8 July 2014 following Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip, Hamas spokesperson Fawzi Barhoum stated, "Today there is no intention of relaxation and calm. Palestinian blood has been spilled. There is no place for talking about peace with the Israeli occupation. If they want to protect their entity from Hamas's missiles, they will have to put an Iron Dome on every home in Israel."<sup>52</sup> This statement captured the hatred and stubbornness of each side towards the other in the long history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This case study is included as an example of civil conflict because the United States (and most of Western Europe) does not recognize Palestine as an independent state at the time of this writing. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict began with the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, and significant violence from both sides has occurred since. Although differing ideologies and contested territory fuel this conflict, this case study

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<sup>50</sup> *Urban Population Growth*, The World Bank. Accessed February 24, 2015.  
[http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.GROW?order=wbapi\\_data\\_value\\_2013+wbapi\\_data\\_value+wbapi\\_data\\_value-last&sort=desc](http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.GROW?order=wbapi_data_value_2013+wbapi_data_value+wbapi_data_value-last&sort=desc).

<sup>51</sup> *Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance* (US Agency for International Development, December 2, 2014), <http://www.usaid.gov/nigeria/democracy-human-rights-and-governance>.

<sup>52</sup> Ishaan Tharoor and Adam Taylor, "10 Quotes That Explain the History of the Gaza Conflict," *The Washington Post*, July 18, 2014, Online edition,  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2014/07/18/10-quotes-that-explain-the-history-of-the-gaza-conflict/>.

examines the impact of youth bulge, unemployment, urbanization, and economic inequality.

The journal *Peace Economics, Peace Science, and Public Policy* published a study in 2012 that analyzed the relationship between Palestinian youth unemployment and Palestinian terrorism and political violence in the Israel-Palestinian conflict from 1997 to 2007. From 1990 to 2010, the Palestinian population increased by 105 percent to over 4.4 million.<sup>53</sup> In 2000, the youth bulge was considerable with young people comprising 49 percent of the adult population in Palestinian Territories.<sup>54</sup> This exceeds the 2003 Population Action International 40 percent threshold.<sup>55</sup> The 2000 age dependency ratio in the Palestinian Territories was extremely high at 99 percent.<sup>56</sup> The 2012 study also found that “youth unemployment is positively and significantly associated with [the] brutality of terrorism and politically motivated violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.”<sup>57</sup>

A 2004 study by Basel A. Saleh in *Topics in Middle Eastern and North African Economics* indicated “a strong direct relationship between the level of violence and the average unemployment rate in the Palestinian Territories....”<sup>58</sup> Additionally, the urban population growth rate from 2000 to 2005 in Palestinian Territories was 4.1 percent, doubling the risk of civil conflict.<sup>59</sup>

Saleh also found that for Israel and the Palestinian Territories, “...1990-2000 was a period of wide disparity in the achieved rates of economic growth and prosperity.<sup>60</sup> While Israelis in general enjoyed unprecedented favorable economic conditions, the Palestinians living in the WBGS [West Bank and Gaza Strip] experienced a level of

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<sup>53</sup> Raul Caruso and Evelina Gavrilovay, “Youth Unemployment, Terrorism and Political Violence, Evidence from the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict.” *Peace Economics, Peace Science, & Public Policy* 18, no. 2 (August 2012): 1.

<sup>54</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 45.

<sup>55</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 40.

<sup>56</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*, 2012.

<sup>57</sup> Caruso and Gavrilovay, “Youth Unemployment, Terrorism and Political Violence, Evidence from the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict.” 21.

<sup>58</sup> Basel A. Saleh, “Economic Conditions and Resistance to Occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: There Is a Causal Connection,” *Kansas State University*, 21, accessed May 1, 2015, <http://www.luc.edu/orgs/meea/volume6/saleh.pdf>.

<sup>59</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 74.

<sup>60</sup> No Income-Adjusted Human Development Index data was available during the period of this study.

economic hardship unforeseen since before the first intifada of 1987.”<sup>61</sup> Israel’s Gini index increased from 38.1 in 1997 to 41.9 in 2005,<sup>62</sup> indicating increased inequality. It is also likely that Palestinians experienced “relative deprivation” during this period.<sup>63</sup> Saleh cautioned that “improving living conditions and increasing income-generating opportunities for young Palestinians will not lead to elimination of attacks against Israelis—it will only reduce it.”<sup>64</sup> Saleh also concluded the suicide bombers’ profile reveals personal grievances, which contributed to a rise in attacks.<sup>65</sup>

During this examined period, Israeli-Palestinian governance was not effective in preventing ongoing conflict that stemmed from differences in ideology, desire for territory, and perhaps exacerbated by demographic pressures. The notorious violence associated with this Mideast conflict has included terrorism, armed conflict, and rebellion. Nigeria has experienced similar hardships since gaining its independence in 1960. Competing religious ideologies have been divisive in both Nigeria and the Mideast region. This division exists between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria, and between Muslims and Jews in the Mideast region. For example, there were 785 sectarian violence-related deaths, ostensibly between Muslims and Christians, in Plateau, Nigeria, from May 2011 to June 2013.<sup>66</sup> Outwardly, both Israeli and Palestinian leaders deny religious motivation for attacks. However, events such as the killing of four rabbis in a Jerusalem synagogue by two young Palestinian men reveal deep-rooted religious undertones.<sup>67</sup> Nigeria’s leaders should look to the brutal Mideast situation and do what they can to curb ongoing violence and prevent intrastate conflict.

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<sup>61</sup> Saleh, “Economic Conditions and Resistance to Occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: There Is a Causal Connection,” 4.

<sup>62</sup> *GINI Index*.

<sup>63</sup> Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, 24.

<sup>64</sup> Saleh, “Economic Conditions and Resistance to Occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: There Is a Causal Connection,” 21.

<sup>65</sup> Saleh, “Economic Conditions and Resistance to Occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: There Is a Causal Connection,” 21.

<sup>66</sup> John Campbell and Asch Harwood, “Why a Terrifying Religious Conflict Is Raging in Nigeria,” *The Atlantic*, July 10, 2013, Online edition, sec. Global, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/07/why-a-terrifying-religious-conflict-is-raging-in-nigeria/277690/>.

<sup>67</sup> Anshel Pfeffer, “The Israel-Palestine Conflict Is Not Just About Land. It’s a Bitter Religious War,” *The Guardian*, November 20, 2014, Online edition, sec. Opinion, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/nov/20/israel-palestine-conflict-religious-war>.

## Pacific Islands

This case study examines the impact of youth bulge, unemployment, and urbanization in the Pacific island countries, with a focus on the sub regions of Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia ranging from 1987 to 2003. For these three sub regions in 1995, young adults represented 44.7, 46.7, and 48.6 percent of the adult population, respectively.<sup>68</sup> A 2005 article written by Doctor Helen Ware, Professor of International Agency Leadership (Peace Building) at the University of New England, Armidale, examined the relationship between demography and internal conflict in these sub regions. Ware reported, “Demographic pressure created by rapid population growth results in a lack of employment opportunities for youths (who provide the majority of participators in civil unrest and conflicts)....”<sup>69</sup>

In the Solomon Islands, a 1999 coup in Guadalcanal ousted the government and forced 20,000 Malaitans to flee their homes.<sup>70</sup> Rapid population growth doubled the Solomon Islands’ numbers from approximately 200,000 in the late 1970s to approximately 400,000 in the late 1990s.<sup>71</sup> Ware identified that the 1999 coup included young men with guns and grievances against an opposing ethnic group.<sup>72</sup>

This case provides a dangerous example of a combined urban youth bulge and high unemployment. Ware wrote, “...Pacific island countries are...prone to violent conflict where governments are weak and population growth has outstripped economic growth and thus employment opportunities.”<sup>73</sup> In 2000 for example, most of the followers of coup leader George Speight in Fiji were unemployed young urban males.<sup>74</sup> In 2000, Fiji’s young adults represented 43.2 percent of the adult population.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*, 2012.

<sup>69</sup> Helen Ware, “Demography, Migration and Conflict in the Pacific,” *Journal of Peace Research* 42, no. 4 (July 2005): 435.

<sup>70</sup> Vijay Naidu and Ellie Vasta, *Current Trends in South Pacific Migration*, Working Paper (Asia Pacific Migration Research Network), accessed March 20, 2015, <http://www.unesco.org/most/apmrpap7.htm>.

<sup>71</sup> *Millennium Development Goals Report: Solomon Islands* (United Nations Country Team for Solomon Islands, June 2005), [http://www.undp.org/content/dam/fiji/docs/SOI\\_MDG\\_REP04.pdf](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/fiji/docs/SOI_MDG_REP04.pdf).

<sup>72</sup> Ware, “Demography, Migration and Conflict in the Pacific,” 450.

<sup>73</sup> Ware, “Demography, Migration and Conflict in the Pacific,” 451.

<sup>74</sup> Ware, “Demography, Migration and Conflict in the Pacific,” 448.

<sup>75</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*, 2012.

The promise of education, potential employment, and public services drove the high rates of Pacific urbanization.<sup>76</sup> Ware found that “inter-island migration [urbanization] is a significant cause of actual or potential conflict.”<sup>77</sup> For the Solomon Islands “The speed of population growth [had] placed pressure on the society through urbanization and on the state through the difficulties of providing education and other services for rapidly growing numbers.”<sup>78</sup> During the study’s observational period, annual urban population growth rates varied with the most notable being the Solomon Islands at 6.2 percent (1999), the Northern Marianas Islands at 5.6 percent (2000), American Samoa at 4.6 percent (2000), and Tuvalu at 4.8 percent (2002).<sup>79</sup> The areas that exceeded Population Action International’s 4 percent threshold faced double the risk of civil conflict.<sup>80</sup>

This case study described how conflict in the Pacific Islands was coincident with a youth bulge, unemployment, and urbanization. The Pacific Islands provide an example of demographic pressure and weak governance, which likely generated conditions for armed internal conflict. The promise of money and prestige can be an attractive alternative for desperate and adventure-seeking young people. Through job creation, infrastructure development, and more equitable distribution of resources, Nigeria could potentially reduce the risk of this growing threat.

### **Counter Case Studies**

There are historical cases where evidence of rapid population growth and its associated demographic factors provide outcomes contrary to the presented hypothesis. In these cases, two or more of the demographic factors were present but did not cause, or correlate with, internal conflict. The following case studies are Singapore, Malaysia, and Botswana. The start of this chapter included discussion of the importance of governance in maintaining state stability. As the evidence will show, it indeed appears that the quality of governance distinguishes these counter case studies from the previous studies.

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<sup>76</sup> Ware, “Demography, Migration and Conflict in the Pacific,” 445.

<sup>77</sup> Ware, “Demography, Migration and Conflict in the Pacific,” 445.

<sup>78</sup> Ware, “Demography, Migration and Conflict in the Pacific,” 450.

<sup>79</sup> Ware, “Demography, Migration and Conflict in the Pacific,” 438.

<sup>80</sup> Cincotta, *The Security Demographic*, 13.



Doctor Goldstone commented that “It is far too simple, and misleading, to simply point to a ‘youth bulge’ and say that a wave of rebellion and revolution will follow. In fact, most countries with large youth bulges have remained stable.... The countries that had revolts in the Arab Spring of 2011 -- Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Libya and Syria -- all had large youth bulges. But other countries in the region and beyond, from Western and Central Africa to Pakistan, did not experience the same upheaval despite having even larger youth bulges.”<sup>81</sup> Additionally, Goldstone wrote “a large youth cohort may either fail to adopt a revolutionary outlook, or fail to inspire a revolutionary movement across society, if a united government provides effective leadership and presides over economic success. For example, Singapore, Malaysia, Botswana and Brazil all had exceptionally rapid population growth in the 1970s that produced a surge in youth, but in each case a firm government and cumulative economic growth kept radicalism in check.”<sup>82</sup> Context does matter. While evidence shows examples of demographic pressure correlating with conflict, the ability of a government to mitigate this risk is important.

Conversely, a revolution can certainly occur without the existence of demographic pressures, including youth bulge. “The presence of a youth bulge is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for rebellion or revolution. If it shares a distinctive, radicalizing experience, even a small youth cohort can adopt a rebellious stance. And if the government is sufficiently inept or divided, and the population at large has sufficient grievances to turn it against the regime, a rebellion or revolution can ensue despite the absence of a youth bulge.”<sup>83</sup> Goldstone concluded, “states that are widely considered ineffective or unjust by their population rapidly lose key supporters and can succumb with astounding quickness in the face of challenges....”<sup>84</sup> While conflict may erupt in the absence of demographic stress, the following counter-case studies highlight instances of demographic stress but no conflict.

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<sup>81</sup> Jack A. Goldstone, “Youth Bulges and the Social Conditions of Rebellion,” *World Politics Review*, November 20, 2012, 1, <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/12507/youth-bulges-and-the-social-conditions-of-rebellion>.

<sup>82</sup> Goldstone, “Youth Bulges and the Social Conditions of Rebellion,” 3.

<sup>83</sup> Goldstone, “Youth Bulges and the Social Conditions of Rebellion,” 3.

<sup>84</sup> Goldstone, “Youth Bulges and the Social Conditions of Rebellion,” 4.

## Singapore

Singapore was under Japanese occupation from 1942 to 1945 and became a British Colony in 1946. It gained self-governance in 1959 before joining the Federation of Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak to form Malaysia in 1963. Singapore separated from Malaysia in August 1965 and has since been an independent republic.<sup>85</sup> Singapore's population expanded rapidly during the 1960s. In 1960 its total fertility rate was 5.5 but declined to 4.7 by 1965 and 2.1 by 1975.<sup>86</sup> This population surge contributed to the large percentage of youth. In 1975 Singapore's percentage of young adults in the overall population of adults was 49.3 percent.<sup>87</sup> Singapore's dependency ratio in 1965 was high at 86 and by 1975 the ratio was still elevated but had decreased to 59.<sup>88</sup> As described in Chapter 2, Henrik Urdal concluded that a large youth bulge with high fertility and high dependency increases a country's potential for conflict.<sup>89</sup>

Singapore also experienced relatively high economic inequality<sup>90</sup> during the 1970s, which reflects in its Gini index of 45 in 1975.<sup>91</sup> To be sure, this elevated index was partially due to differences in employment rates between men and women. Although throughout the 1970s, the number of women in the workforce expanded significantly.<sup>92</sup>

Although Singapore faced rapid population growth, a significant youth bulge, and economic inequality during the 1970s, it did not experience intrastate conflict. This relative peace during a period of demographic pressure is likely due to government action taken to improve the state's condition. For example, during this period, the Singapore government implemented multiple economic improvement programs and supporting

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<sup>85</sup> Gundy Cahyadi et al., *Singapore's Economic Transformation*, Singapore Metropolitan Economic Strategy Report (Prague, Czech Republic: Global Urban Development, June 2004), 3, <http://www.globalurban.org/GUD%20Singapore%20MES%20Report.pdf>.

<sup>86</sup> *Singapore Total Fertility Rate*, World Bank, World Development Indicators (United Nations Data), accessed April 3, 2015, [http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=WDI&f=Indicator\\_Code%3ASP.DYN.TFRT.IN#WDI](http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=WDI&f=Indicator_Code%3ASP.DYN.TFRT.IN#WDI).

<sup>87</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision, Median Age*, Median Age (United Nations Population Division, n.d.), <https://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=PopDiv&f=variableID%3A41>.

<sup>88</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*, 2012.

<sup>89</sup> Urdal, "A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence," 619.

<sup>90</sup> No Income-Adjusted Human Development Index data was available during this period of study.

<sup>91</sup> V. V. Bhanoji Rao and M. K. Ramakrishnan, *Income Inequality in Singapore: Impact of Economic Growth and Structural Change* (Kent Ridge, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1980), 43.

<sup>92</sup> Rao and Ramakrishnan, *Income Inequality in Singapore: Impact of Economic Growth and Structural Change*, 43.



institutions.<sup>93</sup> Similar economic improvement and support institutions in Nigeria could help the government gain support from its citizens, and potentially mitigate the risk of conflict.

## Malaysia

In 1948, the British ruled Malayan territories unified under the Federation of Malaya, and in 1957 the Federation of Malaya gained its independence. The federation was renamed Malaysia in 1963. Malaysia experienced rapid population growth throughout the 1960s and 1970s, although annual growth rates steadily decreased during this period. In 1965 Malaysia's total fertility rate was relatively high at 5.7; in 1970, it was 4.9; in 1975, it was 4.2; and by 1979, the rate had dropped to 3.8.<sup>94</sup> Naturally, this earlier rapid growth caused a significant youth bulge. In 1975 Malaysia's percentage of young adults in the population of adults was 48.4 percent.<sup>95</sup> In addition, Malaysia's age dependency ratio in 1975 was high at 85.<sup>96</sup>

A 2000 report from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development found that prior to the 1970s there was a serious economic imbalance in Malaysia in the areas of distribution of income, employment, ownership and control of economic activity.<sup>97</sup> This unequal resource distribution likely caused "relative deprivation" among the different ethnic groups.<sup>98</sup> The same report also found that after a 1969 racial riot, Malaysia decided that all ethnic groups must equitably share in the economic development of the country and thus introduced the New Economic Policy (1971-90).<sup>99</sup> Malaysia later introduced the National Development Policy (1991-2000). The objective of these economic policies was to eradicate poverty irrespective of ethnic groups.<sup>100</sup> Although Malaysia continued to experience inequality<sup>101</sup> during the 1970s, the New

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<sup>93</sup> Cahyadi et al., *Singapore's Economic Transformation*, 6.

<sup>94</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*, 2012.

<sup>95</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*, 2012.

<sup>96</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*, 2012.

<sup>97</sup> Mohammed B. Yusoff, Fauziah Abu Hasan, and Suhaila Abdul Jalil, *Globalisation, Economic Policy, and Equity: The Case of Malaysia* (OECD Development Center: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, November 30, 2000), 1, <http://www.oecd.org/countries/malaysia/2682426.pdf>.

<sup>98</sup> Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, 24.

<sup>99</sup> Yusoff, Hasan, and Jalil, *Globalisation, Economic Policy, and Equity: The Case of Malaysia*, 2.

<sup>100</sup> Yusoff, Hasan, and Jalil, *Globalisation, Economic Policy, and Equity: The Case of Malaysia*, 2.

<sup>101</sup> No Income-Adjusted Human Development Report data was available during the period of study.

Economic Policy helped to improve the distribution of income among households, which reflects in the fall in the Gini coefficient from 51.3 in 1970 to 44.5 percent in 1989.<sup>102</sup>

With the exception of a declared state of emergency due to political unrest in one of its states (Kelantan) in 1977, Malaysia's effective governance helped maintain relative stability during the 1970s in the midst of rapid population growth, a significant youth bulge, and economic inequality.

## Botswana

The former British protectorate of Bechuanaland gained its independence in 1966 and became the Republic of Botswana. Since 1966 and through the 1970s, Botswana experienced rapid population growth. Botswana's total fertility rate was high in 1966 at 6.7 and held relatively steady with a slight decline to 6.3 by 1979.<sup>103</sup> In 1975, Botswana's percentage of young adults in the overall population of adults was 51.2 percent.<sup>104</sup> Botswana's dependency ratio in 1975 was extremely high at 99.<sup>105</sup>

Botswana experienced extremely high annual urban growth rates of 14.68 percent during the 1960s.<sup>106</sup> During the 1970s this annual rate fell but remained relatively high at 4.66 percent.<sup>107</sup> There are multiple cities in Botswana, the largest (in terms of population size) of which is the capital Gaborone.

In their 2003 study, Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson concluded that the success of Botswana following independence is most likely due to good policies.<sup>108</sup> The study claimed these policies "have promoted rapid accumulation, investment and the socially efficient exploitation of resource rents."<sup>109</sup> The 2003 study also found that "these policies

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<sup>102</sup> Yusoff, Hasan, and Jalil, *Globalisation, Economic Policy, and Equity: The Case of Malaysia*, 2.

<sup>103</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*, 2012.

<sup>104</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*, 2012.

<sup>105</sup> *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*, 2012.

<sup>106</sup> *The Components of Urban Growth in Developing Countries* (United Nations Population Division, September 2001), 14, [http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Archive/Files/studies/United%20Nations%20\(2001\)%20-%20The%20Components%20of%20Urban%20Growth%20in%20Developing%20Countries.pdf](http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Archive/Files/studies/United%20Nations%20(2001)%20-%20The%20Components%20of%20Urban%20Growth%20in%20Developing%20Countries.pdf).

<sup>107</sup> *The Components of Urban Growth in Developing Countries*, 14.

<sup>108</sup> James A. Robinson, Daron Acemoglu, and Simon Johnson, "An African Success Story: Botswana," in *In Search of Prosperity: Analytic Narratives on Economic Growth*, ed. Dani Rodrik (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, n.d.), 32 Daron Acemoglu is from the Department of Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Simon Johnson is from the Sloan School of Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; James A. Robinson is from the Department of Political Science and Department of Economics, University of California at Berkeley.

<sup>109</sup> Robinson, Acemoglu, and Johnson, "An African Success Story: Botswana," 32.

resulted from an underlying set of institutions... that encouraged investment and economic development.”<sup>110</sup> Based on this evidence, it is reasonable to credit the relative peace in Botswana during the 1970s to effective governance.

### **Conclusion**

All nine case studies experienced rapid population growth and subsequently, multiple types of demographic pressure. However, conflict occurred in only the first six cases. For these six, population-induced demographic pressure appears to have caused, or is at least correlated with, internal conflict. Why then did conflict not occur in the last three cases, which had similar circumstances? The answer is governance. Good governance appears to mitigate the likelihood of conflict in states with rapid population growth and demographic pressure, where otherwise conflict would occur in a poorly governed state. The next and final chapter provides thesis results, a chapter summary, US policy recommendations, and recommendations for additional research.

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<sup>110</sup> Robinson, Acemoglu, and Johnson, “An African Success Story: Botswana,” 32.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

*Urbanization and a burgeoning youth population are changing the [African] region's demographics, and young people are increasingly making their voices heard....Ongoing conflicts in Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Central African Republic, as well as violent extremists fighting governments in Somalia, Nigeria, and across the Sahel all pose threats to innocent civilians, regional stability, and our national security.*

US National Security Strategy  
February 2015

### Results

This study hypothesized that the convergence of the population-driven demographic factors of youth bulge, unemployment, urbanization, and economic inequality in Nigeria will increase the risk of civil conflict. The literature provided evidence of these demographic factors causing or correlating with conflict in other states. However, there also were cases in which states experienced similar demographic pressure but conflict did not occur. The difference appears to be the quality of a state's governance. Therefore, this study concludes that the convergence of Nigeria's rapid population growth, youth bulge, high unemployment rates, rapid urban growth, and economic inequality, significantly increases the risk of civil conflict, but good governance may mitigate this risk.

### Chapter Summary

Following the introduction in Chapter 1 of this thesis, Chapter 2 included the exploration of population growth history, current trends, and projections through the year 2100. A brief history of Nigeria followed, which involved government leadership changes, conflict history, and current threats. In addition, there was an examination of combined, population-driven demographic factors including youth bulge, unemployment, urbanization, and economic inequality and their potential to cause, or correlate with, civil conflict. Finally, the concept of governance was introduced.

Chapter 3 included analysis of how each of these demographic factors could increase the risk of internal Nigerian conflict. The study then explored risk of conflict when combining two or more of these factors. The chapter concluded with recommendations to improve Nigerian governance to mitigate the risk of conflict.

Chapter 4 included historical case studies of states that faced combinations of these demographic pressures and the coincidence of internal conflict. These case studies provide qualitative evidence of causation, or at least correlation, of demographic stress increasing the risk of civil clashes. The chapter then followed with multiple cases of states that similarly experienced a combination of demographic pressures, but conflict did not occur. The difference between the first and second set of case studies appears to be the quality of state governance. Case study analysis reveals that good governance during periods of rapid population growth and associated demographic stress appears enough to prevent civil conflict.

This concluding chapter first identifies current US interests in Nigeria, including the establishment of US Africa Command. Recommendations for US policy follow, including considerations for US military, urbanization, education, and a whole-of-community approach. Presented next are recommendations for US Air Force leaders. This chapter closes with recommendations for further research.

### **Current US Interests in Nigeria**

Historically, the United States has given relatively little attention to Africa. This is reasonable given the wars, conflicts, and other contingency operations across Europe and Asia during the past century. Jennifer Sciubba believes “in general Africa is peripheral from the perspective of the US defense community.”<sup>1</sup> By either intent or necessity, US interest will likely increase in coming years as Africa’s populations and economies grow. Nigeria, as Africa’s most populous state and largest economy, will be at the forefront.

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<sup>1</sup> Jennifer Dabbs Sciubba, *The Future Faces of War: Population and National Security*, The Changing Face of War (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2011), 159.

US official development assistance to Nigeria in 2013 was \$485.1 million.<sup>2</sup> Regarding trade, US goods exports to Nigeria totaled \$6.5 billion while imports from Nigeria totaled \$11.7 billion in 2013.<sup>3</sup> Although Nigeria has been a large supplier of US oil, imports of Nigerian crude have decreased from over a million barrels a day in 2011 to about 38,000 as of February 2014.<sup>4</sup> This reflects the overall 90 percent decrease in US imports of oil from African states, due to increased US shale oil production.<sup>5</sup> This level of imports could certainly increase in the future based on oil prices, international affairs, and domestic preferences. In addition, US direct investment in Nigeria was \$8.2 billion in 2012.<sup>6</sup> Other states also provide assistance including the European Union (EU), which pledged a \$40 million grant following Nigeria's first democratic elections. The EU followed this initial grant with aid funding, based on continued democratic performance. The main European donors to this EU aid have been France and Britain.<sup>7</sup>

The United States also provides military assistance to Nigeria. In 2014, the United States sent a remotely piloted vehicle and 80 Air Force troops to neighboring Chad to support the search in Nigeria for over 200 schoolgirls kidnapped by the terrorist group Boko Haram.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the US Army provided communications equipment and shared intelligence with African partner nations to support the fight against the Nigeria-based terrorist group.<sup>9</sup>

## USAFRICOM

In October 2008 the United States took a step towards rectifying its inattention to this region when it officially created an independent command known as the United

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<sup>2</sup> *Official Development Assistance to Nigeria* (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), accessed April 14, 2015, [https://public.tableau.com/views/AidAtAGlance\\_Recipients/Recipients?:embed=n&:showTabs=y&:display\\_count=no?&:showVizHome=no#1](https://public.tableau.com/views/AidAtAGlance_Recipients/Recipients?:embed=n&:showTabs=y&:display_count=no?&:showVizHome=no#1).

<sup>3</sup> *US-Nigeria Trade Facts* (United States Trade Representative, May 1, 2014), <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/africa/west-africa/nigeria>.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew Philips, "U.S. Oil Imports From Africa Are Down 90 Percent," *Bloomberg Business*, May 22, 2014, <http://www.bloomberg.com>.

<sup>5</sup> Philips, "U.S. Oil Imports From Africa Are Down 90 Percent."

<sup>6</sup> *US-Nigeria Trade Facts*.

<sup>7</sup> *IHS Jane's Sentinel: Country Risk Assessments, West Africa*.

<sup>8</sup> Cheryl Pellerin, "DOD Sends UAV, 80 Airmen to Help Nigerian Search," *American Forces Press Service*, May 22, 2014, Online edition, <http://www.af.mil/News/ArticleDisplay/tabid/223/Article/485009/dod-sends-uav-80-airmen-to-help-nigerian-search.aspx>.

<sup>9</sup> Pellerin, "DOD Sends UAV, 80 Airmen to Help Nigerian Search."

States Africa Command (AFRICOM). The AFRICOM mission statement declares that “United States Africa Command, in concert with interagency and international partners, builds defense capabilities, responds to crisis, and deters and defeats transnational threats in order to advance US national interests and promote regional security, stability, and prosperity.”<sup>10</sup> The following excerpt from the USAFRICOM website summarizes the current United States-Nigeria relationship, and the internal challenges facing the African state:

The United States established diplomatic relations with Nigeria in 1960, following Nigeria’s independence from the United Kingdom. From 1966-1999 Nigeria experienced a series of military coups, excluding the short-lived second republic [from] 1979-1983. Following the 1999 inauguration of a civilian president, the US-Nigerian relationship began to improve, as did cooperation on foreign policy goals such as regional peacekeeping. Nigeria's economic growth has been largely fueled by oil revenues. Although the country conducted successful elections in 2011, it faces formidable challenges in consolidating democratic order, including terrorist activities, sectarian conflicts, and public mistrust of the government. Nigeria has yet to develop effective measures to address corruption, poverty, and ineffective social service systems, and mitigate the violence.<sup>11</sup>

This AFRICOM excerpt highlights the fact that the United States is encouraging Nigeria, with US assistance, to solve its own problems.

### **Recommendations for US policy**

The primary thing the United States can do to assist Nigeria in maintaining stability and preventing civil conflict is to encourage good governance. Faced with rapid population growth and a large youth bulge, good governance can potentially create jobs, support urban growth, and provide more equitable distribution of oil revenue. Even with the existence of significant population growth and demographic pressures, good governance can potentially prevent the occurrence of civil conflict.

The RAND Arroyo Center conducted a study to determine the implications of global demographic trends for international and US national security. The study,

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<sup>10</sup> “United States Africa Command,” accessed February 24, 2015, <http://www.africom.mil/what-we-do>.

<sup>11</sup> *United States-Nigeria Relations* (United States Africa Command), accessed February 24, 2015, <http://www.africom.mil/africa/west-africa/Nigeria>.



published in 2000, offered the following three types of response for the United States to demographically created challenges. The first is “Research and Analytic Capabilities,” such as “understanding...what conditions are key to transforming demographic shifts into security issues.”<sup>12</sup> The second is “Development Assistance,” which is necessary to understand potential demographic stress impacts to better target foreign aid.”<sup>13</sup> The third recommended response is “Focused Military Preparedness.” Given projected high urbanization rates, it would be wise for US military personnel to develop tactics, training, and technologies to prepare for urban warfare.<sup>14</sup> These three types of responses create a useful framework from which the United States can prepare to respond, if necessary, to internal Nigerian conflict or other type of disaster.

Many African states, including Nigeria, have experienced, or exhibit the potential for, civil conflict. Nigeria is especially troubling given its current and projected population, demographic pressures, and valuable oil resources. A Nigerian civil war would likely prompt US involvement or at least garner serious US attention. Internal Nigerian conflict would certainly attract international attention if violence occurred on the scale of genocide, created many internally displaced persons, or forced a mass migration of refugees to neighboring states. The United States should continue to engage Nigeria diplomatically in order to be aware of indicators that may lead to trouble.

### **US Military Strategy**

The US military has a role in assisting African states, including humanitarian aid and security support. The following excerpt from the US National Military Strategy emphasizes Africa’s importance to US national security:

Our Nation continues to embrace effective partnerships in Africa. The United Nations and African Union play a critical role in humanitarian, peacekeeping and capacity-building efforts, which help preserve stability, facilitate resolutions to political tensions that underlie conflicts, and foster broader development. To support this, the Joint Force will continue to build partner capacity in Africa, focusing on critical states where the threat of terrorism could pose a threat to our homeland and interests.... We will work in other areas to help reduce the security threat to innocent civilians.

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<sup>12</sup> Brian Nichiporuk, *The Security Dynamics of Demographic Factors* (Population Matters, RAND Arroyo Center, 2000), 50.

<sup>13</sup> Nichiporuk, *The Security Dynamics of Demographic Factors*, 50.

<sup>14</sup> Nichiporuk, *The Security Dynamics of Demographic Factors*, xx.



We must identify and encourage states and regional organizations that have demonstrated a leadership role to continue to contribute to Africa's security. We will help facilitate the African Union's and the Regional Economic Communities' development of their military capacity, including the African Stand-by Force, to address the continent's many security challenges.<sup>15</sup>

As the excerpt states, the US military will focus on critical states with a threat of terrorism. Given the current threat of Boko Haram, Nigeria should be considered one of these critical states. The US military should continue to provide assistance and security support through USAFRICOM in order to prevent or respond to a destabilizing situation. In addition, the US military should anticipate increased support commensurate with Nigeria's population growth.

### **Urbanization Consideration**

As discussed throughout this thesis, demographic pressure from rapid urbanization can increase the potential for conflict. While steady, stable, and state-supported urbanization can benefit a state, a significant disadvantage is the seemingly inevitable forming of extremely poor, squalid areas known as slums. Raymond Struyk and Stephen Giddings of the International Housing Coalition wrote, "Slums result from a toxic combination of weak governance, underinvestment in basic infrastructure, poor planning to accommodate growth, unrealistically high standards for residential neighborhoods, infrastructure standards that are unaffordable for the poor, and insufficient public transportation that limits access to employment."<sup>16</sup> What measures are necessary to mitigate this ever-growing problem?

The United States should encourage, and potentially assist, Nigeria to develop the necessary infrastructure to support its rapid urban population growth. Nigeria must also build the needed capacity to support urban growth projections. In addition, if US forces are directed to respond with force to internal Nigerian conflict in one of its growing cities, "urban conflict presents particular challenges to US conventional capabilities and

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<sup>15</sup> "United States National Military Strategy," 2011, 12, <http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2011-National-Military-Strategy.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> Raymond J. Struyk and Stephen Giddings, *The Challenge of an Urban World: An Opportunity for US Foreign Assistance* (International Housing Coalition), 3, accessed April 13, 2015, [http://www.intlhc.org/docs/The\\_Challenge\\_of\\_an\\_Urban\\_World.pdf](http://www.intlhc.org/docs/The_Challenge_of_an_Urban_World.pdf).

doctrine.”<sup>17</sup> Therefore, US military training should prepare service members for this combat environment.

## **Education**

The United States and the international community should encourage increased education for Nigerian citizens, especially for women. The World Bank considers educating girls and women to have a multiplier effect. Women that are more educated tend to be healthier, participate more in the labor market, have fewer children, provide better health care and education to their children, and lift households and potentially communities out of poverty.<sup>18</sup> Education should also include effective birth-control methods as a means to reduce population growth.

## **Whole of Community Approach**

The 2010 US National Security Strategy describes a “Whole of Government” approach to “integrate all of the tools of American power and work with our allies and partners to do the same.”<sup>19</sup> The 2015 US National Security Strategy updates this terminology to a “Whole of Community” approach, “bringing together all elements of our society—individuals, local communities, the private and non-profit sectors, faith-based organizations, and all levels of government—to make sure America is resilient in the face of adversity.”<sup>20</sup>

A Whole of Community approach is an appropriate strategy to provide assistance to help Nigeria maintain a stable state, prevent state failure, and mitigate the potential for conflict. This approach requires resources from the US Department of State, the US Department of Defense, other government organizations such as the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and non-government organizations such as the American Red Cross. It is clear that Nigeria welcomes this type of engagement given its willingness to join the United States in the Binational Commission.

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<sup>17</sup> Nichiporuk, *The Security Dynamics of Demographic Factors*, xiv.

<sup>18</sup> *Girls’ Education* (The World Bank, December 3, 2014), <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/brief/girls-education>.

<sup>19</sup> “United States National Security Strategy,” 2010, 14, [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss\\_viewer/national\\_security\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> “United States National Security Strategy,” 2015, 8.

## **US Air Force**

In addition to providing security support such as the operation of remotely piloted vehicles to fight terrorism, the US Air Force can assist Nigeria in other ways, such as humanitarian aid. Whether the Air Force is supporting combat operations or providing humanitarian assistance, it is important for personnel to understand the local culture. Given the combat and reconstruction efforts during the recent Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the Air Force is increasingly recognizing the need for its personnel to be culturally aware. For example, professional military education schools such as Air Command and Staff College provide culture studies as a core class. The Air Force can reach a broad audience using this method because hundreds of officers attend each year. These classes however provide only general instruction for various world cultures. Offering specific regional culture studies may build the depth required for airmen to operate in host nations.

For more specialized education and training, officers can serve in the Air Force International Affairs Specialist program. This program has two available career tracks known as PAS and RAS. PAS (Political-Military Affairs Strategist) officers typically serve one international affairs assignment as a Country Desk Officer or at an overseas US embassy. RAS (Regional Affairs Strategist) officers learn a particular foreign language, gain state and regional expertise, and typically continue on a RAS career track, or dual track along with a primary career specialty.<sup>21</sup> Although there are currently several PAS/RAS positions in Africa, the Air Force should increase these numbers, perhaps by a factor of two, as regional interests will likely continue to grow. Those officers trained in West African, and specifically Nigerian, languages and culture will be in great demand to work in embassies or consulates. Culturally knowledgeable airmen can be invaluable to foreign assistance efforts.

## **Recommendations for Additional Research**

This thesis concentrated on analyzing demographic pressure as a risk for Nigerian civil conflict. A study of these same pressures and their potential of increasing the risk of *international* conflict would be valuable. This analysis could also include the potential

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<sup>21</sup> "International Affairs Specialist Description" (United States Air Force), accessed April 14, 2015, <http://www.safia.hq.af.mil/internationalaffairsspecialist/>.

impact of internally displaced persons or refugees resulting from intrastate or interstate conflict. The impact would likely be significant given Nigeria's population size.

Another worthwhile study would be to incorporate analysis of the *demographic transition*, to determine the potential decrease of conflict risk as Nigeria transitions through successive phases. Population Action International (PAI) defined demographic transition as "the change that countries go through when they progress from a population with short lives and large families to one in which people tend to live longer lives and raise small families."<sup>22</sup> PAI claimed states in the early to middle phases of this transition are more vulnerable to civil conflict than states in the later stage.<sup>23</sup>

Africa continues to grow, in terms of population and relevance. The future will likely demand more US attention to this region. Among the diverse states of this large continent, Nigeria stands out by virtue of its population and economy. By taking steps now to improve its governance, educate its citizens, create jobs, support its growing infrastructure and distribute oil revenue more equitably, Nigeria has the potential to be prosperous and avoid major internal conflict.

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<sup>22</sup> *How Demographic Transition Reduces Countries' Vulnerability to Civil Conflict*, Fact Sheet (Washington, D.C: Population Action International, December 2003), 1, [http://pai.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/English\\_version.pdf](http://pai.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/English_version.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> *How Demographic Transition Reduces Countries' Vulnerability to Civil Conflict*, 1.

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